

MEDIEVAL WELSH GENEALOGY AND ITS CONTEXTS

Sicut rogavi te ut remaneres Ephesi cum irem in Macedoniam, ut denuntiaries quibusdam ne aliter docerent, neque intenderent fabulis et genealogiis interminatis: quae quaestiones praesentant magis quam aedificationem Dei, quae est in fide.

As I desired thee to remain at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some not to teach otherwise, not to give heed to fables and endless genealogies: which furnish questions rather than the edification of God, which is in faith.

I Timothy 1.3–4¹

Despite these strictures, interest in ‘fables and endless genealogies’ has remained a pervasive feature of society up to the present day. The two facets of this interest are inextricably bound together. Genealogies are meaningless without the attendant ‘fables’, or rather the social discourses conceptualised through ‘fables’, which inscribe meaning upon them. Likewise, discourses of family, ethnicity and nationality are commonly instrumentalised through the medium of genealogy. During the Middle Ages, this same tendency stimulated the production of genealogical writing right across Europe. This book offers the first full analysis of one particularly rich instance of such genealogical writing, which developed in medieval Wales.

Just as social discourses emerge from and are maintained by society (or those with power in society), so genealogy does not exist without its inherent and inescapable subjectivity. Put simply, genealogy is ‘about’ individuals or families of individuals. In any representation of genealogy, there is present an implicit or explicit desire to demonstrate the relationships between specific people. The subjective and instrumental aspects of genealogy are well encapsulated by the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s first definition of ‘genealogy’: ‘an account of one’s descent from an ancestor or ancestors, by enumeration of the intermediate persons; a pedigree.’² For the purpose of defining medieval genealogies, one might go further. Although many medieval genealogies assume the form of ‘an account of one’s descent’ or a ‘pedigree’, some genealogies take a different perspective, describing, for example, the descendants rather than ancestors of an individual. Either way, the crucial aspect of a genealogy according to this definition is that it is an account of the relations of a specified *subject*. This applies equally to the outcome of modern family history research, the ultimate purpose of which is usually to discover new knowledge about a subject’s ancestors or relatives and arrange this knowledge in relation to the subject. The idea that a genealogy is constituted through its subject, to which any reported genealogical information primarily pertains, is useful for the study of medieval genealogy, and the concept is employed in this sense below.

¹ Cf. Titus 3.9; for comment on the references to genealogies, see Punt, ‘Politics’, pp. 386–9. Throughout this book, the Bible is quoted from the Latin Vulgate text in Weber and Gryson, *Biblia Sacra*. English translations of the Vulgate are taken from the Douay-Rheims translation.

² *OED Online*, s.v. ‘genealogy, *n.*’, 1a.

The activity of creating a genealogical account, and the field of knowledge that this activity produces, can itself constitute 'genealogy' in an epistemological sense, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the investigation of family pedigrees, viewed as a department of study or knowledge'.³ This second definition of genealogy is equally relevant for the present study. On the one hand, any medieval account of familial relationships between individuals can be described as 'a genealogy' in the sense already mentioned. But on the other, the medieval field of knowledge created by the aggregation of such genealogical accounts, and by the routinisation of the practices and conventions that lent structure and meaning to the accounts, might also be legitimately described as 'genealogy'. This study is concerned with genealogy in both these senses. Indeed, if they are to be understood properly, these two senses of 'genealogy' cannot be analysed in isolation, since so much that is known of medieval genealogy as a field of knowledge must be deduced from genealogies rather than from prescriptive accounts written by genealogists.

Why is it that 'fables and endless genealogies' can 'furnish questions rather than the edification of God'? It was not simply the case that people in the past whiled away the hours arguing about whether claims of relationship could be accurately verified. Rather, claims of relationship could carry social, cultural or political meanings, and it was those meanings that 'furnished questions'. Depending on how, where and when one made claim to a genealogical relationship, one might be understood to be claiming ownership of a status, a social or political function or an ethnic affiliation. Such understanding was predicated on the meanings ascribed to particular genealogical connections by dominant cultural discourses. For example, in ninth-century Wales, the claim that a given subject was descended from Cunedda Wledig was given meaning by the cultural discourse or 'fable' that ascribed the foundation of kingship in Gwynedd to Cunedda; in neighbouring England, where that discourse was absent, the same claim would bear no such cultural meaning. It was the cultural meanings attributed to certain personal relationships that made such claims potentially controversial and open to contestation.

This is not to say that all medieval genealogies were fabricated, or that their sole purpose was to advance personal interests. A large proportion of the genealogies surviving from medieval Wales report genealogical relationships with a high degree of accuracy. Indeed, it would scarcely have been possible to invent relationships between individuals who remained present in popular consciousness, because knowledge of genealogy, and especially of the relationships between high-status individuals, was widespread in society. Nevertheless, even verifiable relationships could be reported in ways that endowed the relevant genealogies with contextual meanings that would not be apparent from examining them in isolation. When studying surviving genealogies, it is always necessary to consider the interplay between the genealogies and the contexts of their production and dissemination, in order to appreciate the meaning and relevance of the genealogies for contemporaries.

It was not only the claims of relationship in genealogies that could be ascribed meaning, but also the choices made by genealogists with regard to matters like form and structure. It is no accident that in medieval Wales, just as in neighbouring Ireland and England, written genealogies so often survive within collections of genealogies rather than as isolated textual items. The deliberate arrangement and juxtaposition of genealogies was no less significant for communicating meaning than the contents of the genealogies themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the meanings not only of the genealogies, but also of the collections of genealogies. For instance, while it might hold true that an individual genealogy was originally conceived to *justify* a ruler's position, presumably by partisan supporters of that ruler, it might nevertheless be the case that the genealogical collection into which that ruler's genealogy was later embedded was intended by the compiler merely to *rationalise* contemporary

³ *OED Online*, s.v. 'genealogy, n.', 4.

political circumstances in genealogical terms, without deliberately biasing the presentation of the collection in favour of that one ruler.

The present study is primarily concerned with the interpretation of three major collections of secular genealogies surviving from medieval Wales: the Harleian genealogies, the Jesus 20 genealogies, and the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies. In each case, interpretation proceeds on two complementary fronts. Firstly, principles of manuscript studies and textual criticism are applied in order to understand the parameters of the collections within the contexts of their survival. This process is particularly important for the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies. Since that collection was probably assembled early in the thirteenth century but survives only in later manuscripts dating between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, it is necessary both to understand the various contexts in which the text was preserved and, through the editorial process, to establish the form of the hypothetical archetype, which can be used as a critical basis for further investigation into the 'original' thirteenth-century text. Secondly, the collections are subjected to hermeneutic analysis. The temporal, geographical and political contexts of the latest phases of compilation are suggested through a consideration of the relationship between the overall purpose of the compiler and the specific, contextually locatable meanings that are encoded in individual genealogies. Interpretation of the latter can pose severe difficulties, since it relies on having previously established, from better evidenced instances, the 'rules of the game'; in other words, the practices and conventions underlying genealogy as commonly understood by contemporary practitioners.⁴ This process is inevitably subjective, and in many instances multiple interpretations might be possible (though not necessarily equally probable). Nevertheless, by taking account of the practice of genealogy in medieval Wales as a whole, and by considering the genealogical collections alongside a wide range of other genealogical and non-genealogical sources, it is possible to establish an informed view about the relationships between the genealogical collections and their genealogies.

There is a further complication that emerges as a major factor of interest in the study. Comparison of surviving texts indicates beyond doubt that both the major genealogical collections and the individual genealogies contained therein underwent processes of diachronic development. Collections were re-redacted in several stages over time, and genealogies were sometimes reworked in order to accommodate changes in political circumstances or cultural discourse. Awareness of this process inevitably has a major impact on the interpretative approach described above, for it implies that there is not only one relationship between a compilation and its genealogies, but rather several relationships, embedded stratigraphically within the text. Such layers can be exceedingly difficult to disentangle; indeed, it is sometimes only possible to do so by comparing the texts with one another, which can help to establish more firmly which decisions can be attributed to which agencies.

The closely-knit versions of the pedigrees of the kings of Gwynedd provide an excellent case study for how pedigrees could develop diachronically, both inside and outside of genealogical collections. The Gwynedd pedigrees developed over a very long period, from the ninth to the fifteenth century and beyond. The fifth chapter of this book examines this process, focussing especially on the changes made in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and on the subsequent deployment of the pedigrees down to the reign of Henry VII. The ubiquity of the pedigrees of the kings of Gwynedd allows the discussion to extend to minor genealogical texts that are not directly addressed in the preceding chapters, as well as to the wider influence of Welsh genealogy in English and Icelandic contexts.

⁴ As aptly put by Eric John: 'genealogy was a game to be played with reasonably strict rules. To unravel the rules is, moreover, to learn something about early medieval politics we should not otherwise know': 'Point of Woden', p. 130.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, some of the key factors for the study of genealogy in medieval Wales are discussed. These are grouped into four sections. Firstly, the relationship between kinship and society is examined, focussing on the question of why certain types of genealogical knowledge would have been commonplace in medieval Welsh society. Secondly, the emergence of genealogy as a literary form in early medieval Britain and Ireland is traced. It is within this broader context that the origins of the genre among the Britons of Wales can be located. Thirdly, attention turns to the development of literary genealogy within medieval Wales during the period when this can be observed, between the eighth and the sixteenth centuries. Lastly, there is a brief survey of modern approaches to medieval Welsh genealogy, which provides the scholarly context for the remainder of the book.

Kinship and Society in Medieval Wales

Across medieval Europe, knowledge of family relationships would have been widespread. At a time when one's role and status in society were largely determined by the familial connections engendered through birth and marriage, it was inevitable that people should maintain a keen awareness of those relationships that underpinned their social and legal position. This is not to say that all individuals necessarily possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of their distant relations. For many purposes, what mattered was one's nuclear family: parents, siblings and children. If there was social or political advantage to be gained from association with other relatives, then one might turn to more distant kin, but this was only rarely necessary.⁵ In general, detailed genealogical knowledge was restricted to no more than three or four generations of a family.⁶ Only in certain circumstances was it necessary to be aware of, or draw attention to, more distant connections. For instance, a normative assumption among the medieval land-holding and ruling classes was that it was desirable for a man to transmit his land and social position to his descendants in the male line.⁷ Although in reality the circumstances could often prove more complex than contemporaries may have wished (and historians might imagine), families that successfully facilitated patrilinear inheritance of this kind could develop a dynastic awareness that extended across more than three or four generations.⁸

However, this does not mean that awareness of deeper ancestry was restricted to the male line only. For claims of high status, it might have been more advantageous to draw attention to descent through one or more female connections.⁹ For choosing an appropriate spouse, it became necessary to avoid marriage within the prohibited degrees, taking account of female relations no less than male.¹⁰ During the most stringent phase of the application of this rule, between the first half of the ninth century and the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, one was required to avoid any marriage partners with whom one shared an ancestor (male or female)

⁵ Cf. Sabeian and Teuscher, 'Kinship', pp. 13–14.

⁶ Pohl, 'Genealogy', p. 232. A good example of the general limits of knowledge about one's family is provided by Lambert of Cambrai's *genealogia antecessorum parentum meorum*, which Lambert inserted into the chronicle that he was writing between 1152 and 1170: Duby, 'Structure', pp. 135–43. One need not subscribe to Duby's views about social change in tenth- and eleventh-century France for the example to be instructive: cf. Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, ch. 10; Bouchard, 'Conclusion', pp. 305–6.

⁷ For a perceptive study of such 'patrilinear consciousness' in France between the ninth and eleventh centuries, see Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, ch. 4.

⁸ See the example of the late twelfth-century genealogy of the counts of Guînes, discussed in Duby, 'Structure', pp. 143–6.

⁹ Cf. Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, p. 161.

¹⁰ For the development of the prohibition, see Brundage, *Law*, pp. 140–1, 191–3, 355–6 and 373–4; Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, pp. 40–4.

up to seven generations back.¹¹ In order to comply with such rules, it was, in theory, necessary to be aware of one's ancestry on all sides. The key point in all these cases is that the maintenance and deployment of deep genealogical knowledge was contingent upon requirement and circumstance.

From the twelfth century onwards, external observers occasionally commented that the Welsh had a greater predilection for genealogical knowledge than others. Writing around 1194, Gerald of Wales, in a chapter of his *Descriptio Kambriae* entitled 'De generositatis amore, et genealogia longe retenta' ('Concerning love of high birth, and long-remembered genealogy'), described the Welsh as follows:¹²

Generositatem vero, et generis nobilitatem, prae rebus omnibus magis appetunt. Unde et generosa coniugia plus longe cupiunt, quam sumptuosa vel opima. Genealogiam quoque generis sui etiam de populo quilibet observat; et non solum avos, atavos, et tritavos, sed usque ad sextam vel septimam, et ultra procul generationem, memoriter et prompte genus enarrat in hunc modum; Resus filius Griphini, Griphinus filius Resi, Resus filius Theodori; et sic deinceps, ut supra de generatione principum.

They truly desire high birth and nobility of kin [*generis nobilitatem*] above all other things. For this reason, they covet marriages into high-born families more greatly than marriages into wealthy or rich families. Indeed, every person preserves the genealogy of his kin [*Genealogiam [...] generis*], and recites the descent unhesitatingly from memory not only to grandfathers, great-grandfathers and great-great-grandfathers, but even as far as the sixth or seventh generation and far beyond, in this manner: Rhys son of Gruffudd, Gruffudd son of Rhys, Rhys son of Tewdwr; and so on, as with the genealogy of the princes above.

Writing over three centuries later, in the first half of the sixteenth century, the English anti-quary John Leland drew attention to a similar practice:¹³

Ea enim est, & semper fuit, natura Cambrorum, ut manifesto probro sibi esse ducant foris sapere, domi autem non sapere. Quare ab ipsa pueritia parentum suorum genealogias, tum etiam patrias antiquitates religiose discunt. Ausim hoc adfirmare nullam esse gentem, quae tam expedite de situ locorum circumiacentium, de urbibus, de montibus, de lacubus, de fluminibus, & eorum cursu pronuntiet. Nunquam facile credidissem Cambros ita in suis rebus exercitatos fuisse, nisi paesens praesentes illos per totam late Cambriam audivissem.

For it is, and always has been, the nature of the Welsh to take it as a flagrant disgrace for them to know about external matters, but not about domestic ones. Because of this, from youth they religiously learn both the genealogies of their ancestors and their native antiquities. I dare say that there is no people which can so easily pronounce about the siting of surrounding places, about cities, about mountains, about lakes, and about rivers and their courses. I might never have easily believed that the Welsh were so expert in their own affairs, had I not been present to hear about them everywhere throughout the whole of Wales.

Comparing these passages side-by-side, three noteworthy points emerge: (1) the high value placed by the Welsh on what Gerald calls *generis nobilitas* ('nobility of kin'); (2) the widespread ability among the Welsh to recite their agnatic ancestry back as far as six or seven

¹¹ Cf. Bouchard, "Those of My Blood", ch. 3.

¹² *Descriptio* I.17. For the date of the first recension of the *Descriptio Kambriae*, see Dimock, *Itinerarium*, pp. xxxix–xl; Bartlett, *Gerald*, p. 216.

¹³ John Leland, *Commentarii*, ch. DLXXIII (ed. Hall II, 464). Cf. Lloyd-Morgan, 'Narratives', p. 135. For some early modern attitudes towards Welsh genealogies, see F. Jones, 'Approach', p. 303; Powell, 'Genealogical Narratives', p. 175.

generations or beyond; and (3) the apparent longevity of the love of genealogy among the Welsh, even into the sixteenth century. Each of these points is considered in turn.

Status and Descent

For the first point, it is essential to recognise that, in medieval Welsh society, there was no distinction between nobility and freedom.¹⁴ A freeman who had inherited his land was a *breyr* (etymologically ‘district-king’) or more commonly *uchelwr* (lit. ‘high-man’), regardless of his level of wealth and power relative to other freemen. In the Latin texts of the Welsh laws, men of this status are generally termed *optimas*, or occasionally *nobilis*.¹⁵ The essential qualification for belonging to this class was *bonedd*, whose range of meanings, tellingly, encompasses nobility, noble descent, lineage and pedigree.¹⁶ Even a freeman who had not yet inherited his land was still *bonheddig* or *nobilis* (‘noble, aristocratic, of noble lineage’). To be of free or aristocratic status, one had to be descended from others of the same status. The concept of *generis nobilitas* was thus inextricably bound up with notions of descent. As Gerald suggests, this would certainly have encouraged one to choose marriage partners on the basis of descent rather than immediate material circumstances. It would also have encouraged knowledge of one’s linear ancestors.

This is not to say that disparities in status did not exist within Welsh free society. The most obvious disparity was between ordinary freemen and royalty. As was the case everywhere else in medieval Europe, it was much more desirable to marry the daughter of a king than the daughter of a non-royal *uchelwr*, however powerful he might be. For instance, the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies record that the numerous daughters of Gruffudd ap Cynan, king of Gwynedd (d. 1137), married some of the most prominent Welsh kings and lords of the day.¹⁷ Moreover, the aura of royal status did not necessarily disappear as soon as a branch of a royal dynasty had lost the right to rule. This may be seen in the case of Gruffudd ap Cynan himself. Before his succession, Gruffudd was technically ineligible for the kingship of Gwynedd, because neither his father nor any uncles had been king before him. It was therefore necessary to justify Gruffudd’s succession in a different way. Gruffudd’s biographer did so by constructing a genealogical argument to show that Gruffudd was overwhelmingly royal in status because he was descended from many separate royal families on both his father’s and mother’s sides.¹⁸ People like Gruffudd had ample reason to remember and value distant royal descent even if it stemmed from a king’s daughter or from a junior branch of a royal dynasty. Even before his succession to the kingship, Gruffudd was no ordinary *uchelwr*.

¹⁴ See the discussion and references in *EIWK* 172–3; cf. Jenkins, ‘Second Look’, pp. 64–5.

¹⁵ E.g. the term used by Latin D, *optimas*, is rendered into Welsh in *Llyfr Blegywryd* as *breyr*: Latin D (ed. Emanuel, *Latin Texts*, p. 318.22–3); *Llyfr Blegywryd* (ed. S. J. Williams and Powell, p. 5.12). For the relationship between the two, see Emanuel, ‘Book’; Charles-Edwards, *Welsh Laws*, pp. 20–1 and 31–5. In Latin B, *optimas* is similarly used as the general word for a person of this status, though the wergild of the *pencenedl*, which is specified as a position held by an *uchelur*, is considered under the heading ‘De dignitate penkenedyl et aliorum nobilium’ (‘Concerning the status of the *pencenedl* and other *nobiles*): Latin D (ed. Emanuel, *Latin Texts*, pp. 207.30 and 219.19). Gerald of Wales himself equates *Huchelwer* (i.e. *uchelwyr*) with *nobiles*: *Descriptio* I.2. The relevant passage is quoted and discussed in Chapter 3 below, pp. 118–21.

¹⁶ *GPC Online*, s.v. *bonedd*. Among the glosses on the ninth-century Welsh Juvenius manuscript, one finds Old Welsh *boned* glossing Latin *gentem*, here meaning ‘family origin’: McKee, *Cambridge Juvenius*, pp. 294–5. For an introduction to the Juvenius manuscript, see too McKee, ‘Scribes’.

¹⁷ *LIIG* 15.1, 15.2, 30.1.1, 31.1.1, 32.1.1, 33.1.1, A1.1.1, A2.

¹⁸ *VGC* §§2–7; cf. *EIWK* 220–3; Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 333–4; Smith, ‘Biography’, pp. 348–9.

Knowledge of Deep Ancestry

Gerald's claim that the Welsh could generally recall their agnatic descendants as far back as six or seven generations or more should be set in perspective.¹⁹ Not all circumstances required knowledge of lineage that was so deep. As has already been noticed, distant descent from kings did not automatically entitle one to rule, even if it could imbue one with royal status. Although there is some slight variation in the Welsh law-books, it was generally agreed that only the king's son, nephew or brother was entitled to succeed to the kingship on the death of the king.²⁰ A potential heir was termed an *edling* (a term borrowed from Old English *ætheling*); sometimes a single *edling* was designated as the sole heir-apparent during the lifetime of the king.²¹ Contrary to what has sometimes been claimed, Welsh kingship was not generally partible at the point of succession.²² Partibility was rather a feature of the inheritance of land.²³ For the purpose of land inheritance, it was necessary to know a slightly wider group of kinsmen, though one still no more than four generations in depth: namely, those descended in the male line from a common great-grandfather. Upon the death of a landholder, his land would ordinarily be divided equally among all his surviving sons. No distinction was made between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' sons; all that mattered was that the deceased man had previously acknowledged his paternity of those sons. However, the division of the original landholder's land was not made permanent until after the generation of his great-grandsons. This was because the landholder's sons, grandsons and great-grandsons could reshare the land between themselves if, for whatever reason, the division had become imbalanced. This system could work as a mechanism against the escheat of land to the lord, since the lands of anyone who had died without a male heir would pass first to other agnatic relatives within a four-generation group.²⁴ In order to maintain one's rights of inheritance, it was therefore essential to know all of one's agnatic relations within three degrees of kinship.²⁵

There were, nevertheless, certain contexts in which knowledge of deeper ancestry, and of a broader range of contemporary collateral relatives, was required. One of these contexts was the feud that arose, following a homicide, between the kindred of the slayer and the kindred of the slain, alongside the system of compensation intended to counter that feud. The homicide, the feud and the compensation were all termed *galanas* in Welsh.²⁶ In theory, reconciliation of the opposing factions could be achieved through the payment of *galanas* (i.e. 'wergild') by the kindred of the perpetrator to the kindred of the victim.²⁷ For the purposes of this compensation payment, four kindreds were involved on each side, encompassing the

¹⁹ For what follows in the remainder of this section, see generally *EIWK* ch. 3; for a similar discussion focussed on the early Middle Ages, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 293–304.

²⁰ *EIWK* 217–18.

²¹ For the position of the *edling* in the Welsh law-books, see Stacey, 'King', esp. pp. 47–53. For other Welsh terms denoting the heir-apparent, see Charles-Edwards, 'Heir-apparent'. In Anglo-Saxon England, the word *ætheling* was used to denote any potential heir to the throne: see Dumville, 'Ætheling'.

²² This was established by Smith, 'Dynastic Succession' (recapitulated more succinctly in Smith, 'Succession'). For the early medieval period, see too Charles-Edwards, 'Dynastic Succession'; Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 329–32.

²³ For an extended treatment of medieval Welsh land law, see Jenkins, 'Second Look' (see pp. 48–9 for partible inheritance).

²⁴ There are even recorded cases of land passing to second cousins once removed, who were technically outside of the four-generation group: Brown, 'Kinship', pp. 500–1.

²⁵ For an excellent discussion of the fate of this system of inheritance in the later Middle Ages (based on the records of the commote of Llannerch), see Smith, 'Family'.

²⁶ For an introduction to *galanas*, see Jenkins, 'Crime', pp. 15–19; for more detail and aspects of diachronic development, see Charles-Edwards, 'The Three Columns of Law: A Comparative Perspective', pp. 29–39.

²⁷ The following summary simplifies the difficult and sometimes contradictory evidence from the Welsh law-books: see *EIWK* 181–200.

kindreds of the four grandparents of both perpetrator and victim (both signified below as 'ego'). These four kindreds were conceived agnatically. Thus, for this purpose, both grandfathers and grandmothers belonged to the agnatic kindreds of *their* fathers (i.e. ego's four great-grandfathers). Only one of these four kindreds would be ego's own agnatic kindred. For the collection and payment of *galanas*, it was, according to the law-books, necessary to consider these four kindreds to a depth of six or seven generations back from ego. Thus, in theory, all agnatic descendants of four of ego's male ancestors in the sixth or seventh degree (traced agnatically through ego's four great-grandfathers) were eligible to pay (on the perpetrator's side) or receive (on the victim's side) the compensation.²⁸ In other words, even relatives as distant as ego's sixth cousins were implicated in the system of *galanas* envisaged by the law-books, for they shared a common ancestor with ego in the seventh degree.

A telling remark concerning the feasibility of knowledge of the deep kindred group is found in *Llyfr Iorwerth*, the law-book associated with thirteenth-century Gwynedd, in a section describing how very distant kinsmen (related beyond seven degrees) could pay the perpetrator's share should the perpetrator be unable to pay:²⁹

O deruyd na bo y'r llourud dym a talho, yaun yu rody ydau keynnyauc palader eg kymorth. Ac esef e telyr ydau, o'r seythuet dyn allan; ac esef yu e seyth dyn henne, braut a keuenderu a keuerderu a keyuyn a gorcheyu en a gorchau a ney uab gorchau. A chany ellyr ryuau kerennyd o henne allan, talent ydau keynnyauc palader.

If it happens that the homicide has nothing which he can pay, it is proper to give him a spear penny in assistance; and thus it will be paid to him — from the seventh person on [i.e. to more distant relations], and these are those seven persons: brother and first cousin and second cousin and third cousin and fourth cousin and fifth cousin and nephew son of a fifth cousin [i.e. sixth cousin]; and since kinship cannot be counted from there on, let them pay him a spear penny.

For the payment of *galanas*, the share owed by the kindred of the perpetrator was theoretically owed by relations no more distant than fifth or sixth cousins, or, to put it another way, relations with whom the homicide shared an ancestor who lived no more than six or seven generations ago. But in this passage, it is suggested that even more distant kinsmen could be called upon to pay the perpetrator's own share should the perpetrator be unable to pay. It is striking that, for these more distant relatives, it is assumed that their relationship to the perpetrator could not be defined precisely. The hypothetical rules of *galanas* thus encouraged knowledge of one's descent back six or seven generations through four separate lines, as well as knowledge of one's collateral kinsmen as far as fifth or sixth cousins on four sides of the family, though no more.³⁰ This may go some way to accounting for Gerald's observation that the Welsh could recite their agnatic ancestors back as many as six or seven generations.

In practice, however, it was unlikely that, in most cases of *galanas*, one would need to or even be able to involve collateral relatives as distant as fifth or sixth cousins. This is borne out by late medieval record evidence from marcher lordships where *galanas* had not been abolished. For example, in the lordship of Clun in the fourteenth century, the *galanas* kindred was reckoned only to the fourth degree rather than the sixth or seventh.³¹ It has been

²⁸ It is the sixth degree in *Llyfr Cyfnerth*, *Llyfr Blegywryd* and the Latin law-books, but the seventh degree in *Llyfr Iorwerth*.

²⁹ *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Galanas B), §106/6–8 (ed. Wiliam, p. 71; ed. Charles-Edwards, 'The Three Columns of Law from Iorwerth Manuscripts E and B', p. 268; transl. Jenkins, *Laws*, p. 145; transl. *EIWK* 201); I have followed Charles-Edwards's text and translation. Cf. *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Galanas E), §107/4–5 (ed. and transl. Charles-Edwards, 'The Three Columns of Law from Iorwerth Manuscripts E and B', pp. 266–7). For the development of *Llyfr Iorwerth*'s tract on *galanas*, see Charles-Edwards, 'Galanas Tractate'.

³⁰ This is also pointed out in R. R. Davies, 'Survival', p. 349, with reference to a sixteenth-century example.

³¹ R. R. Davies, 'Survival', p. 345; cf. Smith, 'Contribution', pp. 91–3.

suggested by Thomas Charles-Edwards that *Llyfr Iorwerth*'s seven-generation *galanas* kin might have been the result of an extension that took place under the influence of the canonical prohibition of marriage within seven degrees.³² If this is correct, then it is notable that the same factors were encouraging deeper genealogical knowledge in medieval Wales as elsewhere in medieval Europe.

The Continuing Significance of Deep Ancestry

A further context in which knowledge of deeper ancestry was required helps us to address the third point raised above, concerning the longevity of interest in genealogy in medieval Wales. Although the inheritance of land was organised within an agnatic descent group of no more than four generations in depth, one often finds in later medieval records, such as the 'extents' of the fourteenth century, references to land-holdings (termed *gwelyau* or *gafaelion*) that are named from ancestors of the current holders who lived more than four generations ago.³³ For example, in Llysdulas on Anglesey, one of those holding land in the *gwely* of Tegeryn ap Carwed in the middle of the fourteenth century was a great-great-great-grandson of Tegeryn.³⁴ In the context of land-holding, the word *gwely* had originally referred to the agnatic descendants of a common ancestor, but since any land that had been obtained by that common ancestor in free tenure came to be inherited by his agnatic descendants, the land-holding itself could also be termed a *gwely*. In the case of the *gwely* of Tegeryn ap Carwed, the *gwely* had retained the name of the holder's distant ancestor, even though, by the fourteenth century, that ancestor had little direct bearing upon the land-holding rights of his descendants, which depended on inheritance through the four-generation group. However, it seems that the significance of the deeper ancestral link invoked by the holding's eponym lay with the obligations of the holders, rather than their rights of inheritance, since the nature of those obligations had been established when the land was held by the *gwely*'s eponym (in this case, Tegeryn ap Carwed).³⁵ The obligations, which had initially been established by the native Welsh princes, were given a degree of permanence by the conquest of the Welsh principality by Edward I in 1282–3. Later generations of Welshmen, even down to the sixteenth century, were thus required to invoke comparatively deep ancestry in order to explain the nature and distribution of the obligations associated with those of their land-holdings held under Welsh free tenure.³⁶

But despite the existence of such legal and economic reasons for retaining knowledge of one's ancestry, it was the ongoing association of noble birth and noble ancestry that was the most decisive factor for the perpetuation of knowledge of deep agnatic ancestry among the Welsh *uchelwyr* or 'gentry' of the later Middle Ages.³⁷ If one could demonstrate that one was descended from a recognised noble lineage, then one was noble, regardless of the extent of one's wealth and landed possessions.³⁸ To a considerable degree, it was the continued social significance of such genealogical knowledge that enabled genealogists in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to record pedigrees from oral sources that were largely accurate for the preceding two or three centuries.³⁹ Little wonder John Leland was so amazed.⁴⁰

³² *EIWK* 193–7.

³³ For an introduction to the extents, see Carr, 'Jones Pierce Revisited'.

³⁴ Jones Pierce, 'Medieval Settlement', pp. 5–6.

³⁵ *EIWK* ch. 4; Carr, *Gentry*, p. 10.

³⁶ For further discussion of *gwelyau* and *gafaelion*, see Chapter 4 below, pp. 210–11.

³⁷ See especially Carr, *Gentry*, pp. 1–2.

³⁸ For the wealth of the gentry of North Wales in the later Middle Ages, see Carr, *Gentry*, ch. 3.

³⁹ Guy, 'Writing Genealogy', p. 102; Bartrum, 'Notes', pt 1, 68–70.

⁴⁰ Gwenogvryn Evans encountered a comparable situation at the end of the nineteenth century: 'a considerable section of the community takes a most astonishing interest in this subject of pedigrees, and a

Common Genealogy and Literary Genealogy

In the preceding sections, it was emphasised that knowledge of genealogy would have been pervasive at every level of free society in medieval Wales. A freeman would have known many aspects of his own genealogy, his neighbours' genealogies, and probably the genealogies of his lords and kings. The applications of this genealogical knowledge were varied. Different social, legal and political situations required the deployment of precise, contextually bound genealogies, which thereby differed in scope and content depending on the context, even for a single individual. Such contexts were usually ephemeral.⁴¹ The genealogical knowledge deployed by an individual to underline his or her social status may have overlapped little with the genealogical knowledge deployed in a case of *galanas*; and the latter may have differed considerably again from the genealogical knowledge deployed for another case of *galanas* twenty years later.

Since these pragmatic, everyday genealogies existed only within the contexts for which they were evoked, there was little need to write them down and preserve them for posterity. The genealogical knowledge that informed such genealogies was communicated orally and confirmed only through collective acceptance of its veracity; the presentation of that knowledge in a written genealogy would have brought little additional benefit in most circumstances. Accordingly, the written genealogies that survive today from medieval Wales, just like those from elsewhere, are not representative of the full range of situations that instigated the use of genealogy in everyday life. Surviving written genealogies do not merely reflect everyday oral genealogies.⁴²

The relative truism of this notion is qualified by the exceptions. Some medieval genealogies of a more ephemeral kind do indeed survive within the transitory contexts that generated them. For instance, short genealogies of only three or four generations were sometimes written onto the dorses of charters, particularly in Italy, from the tenth and early eleventh centuries onwards, to illustrate the prior descent of properties that had subsequently fallen into ecclesiastical hands.⁴³ In a similar manner, the court rolls from the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd in late medieval Wales contain sufficiently detailed genealogical information, including records of agnatic descent going back three, four or even five generations, to allow the reconstruction of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century families in some detail.⁴⁴ Most striking is the five-generation genealogy inserted into the Dyffryn Clwyd court rolls of 1313 for the commote of Colion, which shows the relationships between the twenty-seven co-parceners who partitioned their ancestral land between themselves in that year.⁴⁵ In these examples, the existence of the genealogical information in writing is contingent upon specific legal circumstances. But in the context of the literary manuscripts where one finds the majority of written genealogies surviving from medieval Wales, there is only one instance known to me where genealogies were recorded to illustrate a contemporary legal issue. These genealogies are found written into the margins of pages 522–3 of a late thirteenth-century Latin manuscript, now Exeter 3514, which preserves texts associated with the Cistercian abbey

student not nursed in the firm faith of a descent from a follower of the Norman Bastard, or a Welsh Royal tribe finds himself frequently in a most embarrassing position': *RMWL* I.ii, p. vi. My thanks to Thomas Charles-Edwards for this reference.

⁴¹ The fragmentary and circumstantial nature of oral genealogies has been observed in anthropological contexts: Wilson, *Genealogy*, p. 23.

⁴² A point made emphatically in an Irish context by Ó Corráin, 'Irish Origin Legends', p. 69; Ó Corráin, 'Historical Need', p. 144; Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', p. 189; cf. Miller, 'Historicity', p. 255.

⁴³ Genicot, *Les généalogies*, 1985 supplement, p. 2.

⁴⁴ E.g. Barrell and Davies, 'Land', pp. 32–3; Brown, 'Kinship', pp. 516–19; and cf. the comments of Smith, 'Family', p. 426.

⁴⁵ Brown, 'Kinship', pp. 497–8.

of Whitland in Carmarthenshire.⁴⁶ The annotator of the manuscript was clearly concerned with marriage within the prohibited degrees. In the lower margin of page 523, the annotator explicitly shows that both Richard de Stackpole (fl. 1272–1308) and Lucy de Camville were descended in the fourth degree from William de Carew (fl. 1194–d. c. 1213).⁴⁷ What the annotator does not mention is that Richard de Stackpole and Lucy de Camville were married, and that their marriage was contested: on 21 July 1290 they received a papal dispensation from Pope Nicholas IV to remain married, despite being ‘related in the fourth degree of kindred’, because ‘the marriage [had] been made in order to put an end to the enmities which have long subsisted between the two families’.⁴⁸ One can only speculate as to why the matter would have been of interest to the annotator, and whether the genealogies were written down before or after the dispensation was granted. But it remains clear that this genealogy was written for the purpose of illustrating a specific legal issue.

The majority of written genealogies surviving from medieval Wales were created for no such legal purpose. Instead, most of them were designed for one of only two purposes: (1) to specify the origins of the (usually royal) status of a subject, typically in relation to one or more territories; and (2) to outline the perceived interrelationships between multiple branches of a family.⁴⁹ It was only these relatively limited functions of genealogy that were consistently expressed in literary form in medieval Wales. The remainder of the broad field of knowledge that constituted everyday genealogy continued to exist, but it was not deemed to be an object of literary attention. An important distinction therefore arose between ‘literary genealogy’, which was written down for limited purposes according to established literary conventions, and ‘common genealogy’, which was constituted, usually orally, in specific, often legal, contexts. Although the literary conventions that were applied to the writing of genealogy must have affected popular conception of genealogy in non-literary contexts,⁵⁰ they nevertheless ensured that literary genealogy became a phenomenon distinct from common genealogy. Literary genealogy was, moreover, a distinctly literate phenomenon. An informed person might have been aware of all the genealogical information contained in any given genealogical literary text, but that person was unlikely to have ‘performed’ that literary text from memory in the form in which it had been written down. The distinction between genealogical knowledge and genealogical performance is explored further below in relation to Welsh bardic knowledge of genealogy.

The literary conventions governing the presentation of Welsh genealogical texts were not exclusive to Wales. They seem to have emerged within an early medieval Insular context and may be observed in both early medieval Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England. The early stages of this process, in which one might locate the birth of the Welsh literary genealogical tradition, are addressed in the following sections.

⁴⁶ For this manuscript, see Crick, ‘Power’; for the possible Whitland connection, see Smith, “‘Cronica de Wallia’”, pp. 277–82. For other genealogies in this manuscript, see Chapter 5 below, pp. 243–56.

⁴⁷ For Richard de Stackpole, see Owen, *Old Pembroke Families*, p. 27 and Stackpole, *History*, pp. 33–4. For William de Carew, see Round, ‘Origin’, pp. 24–5. For the Camvilles of Llanstephan, see Lloyd, ed., *History of Carmarthenshire* I, 196, 236 and 284.

⁴⁸ Bliss, *Calendar*, p. 515; cf. Stackpole, *History*, p. 33. Note that Lucy’s surname is misspelt as ‘de Rannvilla’ (for ‘de Kannvilla’).

⁴⁹ These purposes of written genealogy in medieval Wales are recognised and described in *EIWK* 207–9 and Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 360–4. In the latter, Charles-Edwards further distinguishes between the ‘status genealogy’ and the ‘agnatic pedigree’, though it could be argued that the agnatic pedigree is just a simple form of status genealogy.

⁵⁰ For an example of this from the sixteenth century, see Guy, ‘Writing Genealogy’, pp. 112–13.

Literary Genealogy in the Insular World

Conceptual Framework

In the early Middle Ages, literary genealogy was exclusively dedicated to biblical, ethnic, royal or saintly subjects. The primary exemplar for literary genealogy was the Bible, which features a plethora of genealogies concerning exactly these subjects.⁵¹ For instance, the Book of Genesis describes in great detail the descendants of the sons of Noah, among whom may be found the eponyms of many peoples and places. In that context, genealogical exposition was an effective and concise way to reconcile the evident diversity of peoples known to contemporaries with the idea that the flood destroyed all of humanity except Noah's family.⁵² In the words of the Latin Vulgate, 'hae familiae Noe, iuxta populos et nationes suas. Ab his divisae sunt gentes in terra post diluvium' ('These are the families of Noe, according to their peoples and nations. By these were the nations divided on the earth after the flood').⁵³ Interest in genealogy is similarly found in the New Testament. The Gospel of Matthew opens with what the Latin Vulgate terms 'Liber generationis Iesu Christi filii David filii Abraham' ('The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham'): what follows is a detailed genealogy demonstrating the descent of Jesus's father Joseph from King David and the patriarch Abraham, among many others.⁵⁴ The quoted passage uses the word *filius* ('son') to draw attention to the importance of Jesus's notional descent from David and Abraham, even though Jesus was not the literal son of David and nor was David the literal son of Abraham. This usage was clearly the inspiration for a passage in the twelfth-century Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan, setting out what it calls Gruffudd's 'caelestem prosapiam et divinum genus' ('heavenly pedigree and divine lineage'): 'vere illud affirmetur, fuisse Griffinum Kynani, Kynanum Adae, Adam vero Dei filium' ('let it be truly affirmed that Gruffudd was the son of Cynan, Cynan the son of Adam, and Adam the son of God').⁵⁵ This passage immediately follows a far more extensive section concerning Gruffudd's earthly lineage. Gruffudd's 'heavenly pedigree' was evidently intended as a kind of counterbalance to the preceding secular genealogy, motivated possibly by the kind of religious discomfort with secular genealogy expressed in the letter to Timothy quoted at the beginning of this chapter. But upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that both the 'secular' and 'heavenly' genealogies ultimately follow formal precedents set by the Bible; this suggests that the debate about the appropriateness of secular genealogy within Christian society took place as much within the religious sphere as between the secular and religious spheres.

Although early medieval literary genealogies variously concerned biblical, ethnic, royal or saintly subjects, most such genealogies were constructed within a common, overarching conceptual framework. Where saints' genealogies were specified, they almost invariably comprised branches of royal dynasties. Very many examples of this may be seen in the corpus of Irish saints' genealogies, which may have existed in some form by the middle of the tenth century.⁵⁶ Kings' genealogies, in turn, were often traced back to eponyms that were intrinsically representative of the origin of the polity or ethnic group. If it could be

⁵¹ Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', pp. 204–5.

⁵² Johnson, *Purpose*, pp. 4–7 and 77.

⁵³ Genesis 10.32.

⁵⁴ Matthew 1.1; cf. Luke 3.23–38. For discussion of these genealogies of Jesus, see Johnson, *Purpose*, chs 5–7; Punt, 'Politics', pp. 381–6.

⁵⁵ *VGC* §7.

⁵⁶ According to its editor, the recension of this corpus preserved in the earliest extant manuscript witness (Rawlinson B. 502, c. 1131) may have been 'first composed at the Columban monastery of Kells at a

demonstrated that the king descended from the lineage of highest status within the terms of the group's cultural discourse, the conclusion would follow that the king was the natural leader of that group. Legitimacy sprang from the logic of the teleology. Thus, the kings of Dyfed in the tenth century claimed descent from 'Dyfed', an eponym representing the kingdom, while the eighth- and ninth-century kings of the East Saxons claimed descent from the Saxon ethnonym *Seaxnet*.⁵⁷

When such genealogical arguments involved ethnonyms, they were commonly (though not invariably) predicated on the assumption that all members of the ethnic group descended from the ethnonym.⁵⁸ In the early Middle Ages, the idea of common descent was one of the most significant characteristics of ethnic group consciousness.⁵⁹ In such an environment, the importance of the king's pedigree was therefore its relative distinction and its inclusion of other figures associated with kingship, rather than simply the fact of its existence and its potential to demonstrate the king's descent from the ethnonym. For instance, according to the *Historia Brittonum*, Britto (or Brutus) was the common ancestor of all the Britons; a pedigree traced back to Britto/Brutus was therefore not inherently royal, but rather required some other marks of distinction.⁶⁰ In an English context, Bede explicitly mentions that Woden provided the *stirps* ('stem, stock') from which many of the English royal lineages traced their origin.⁶¹ Woden was not an ethnonym, but rather, by the eighth century, a genealogical marker of royalty, as is borne out by the many English royal pedigrees traced back to him.⁶² Equivalent genealogical markers of royalty in Brittonic pedigrees were Beli Mawr and Maxim Wledig.⁶³

The ethnonyms themselves, representing both the peoples and their kings, could be incorporated into genealogical frameworks of nations inspired by the Bible. The best examples come from Ireland. In the vernacular grammatical treatise *Auraicept na nÉces* ('The Scholars' Primer'), the canonical part of which perhaps dates to an early stage of the Old Irish period (700–900), a story is told of a certain Goidel, an eponym for the Irish language, who was assigned the language by its creator, Féníus Farsaid, following the fall of the Tower of Babel.⁶⁴ By no later than the early ninth century, the lineage of Goidel Glas had been traced back through a long pedigree to Japheth son of Noah, as witnessed, for example,

date not earlier, and perhaps a generation or so later, than 938': Ó Riain, *Corpus*, p. xvii; cf. *ibid.*, pp. xxvii–xxix. For doubts, see Jaski, 'Genealogical Section', p. 319.

⁵⁷ For Dyfed, see HG 2; LIIG 38.1; Guy, 'Earliest Welsh Genealogies', pp. 477–85. For *Seaxnet* and the East Saxon genealogies, see Yorke, 'Kingdom', pp. 3–4 and 13–16; Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List: Manuscripts and Texts', pp. 31–2; Dumville, 'Kingship', p. 78. For a general discussion of ethnic terminology in early medieval Britain (especially among the English), see Pohl, 'Ethnic Names' and cf. Charles-Edwards, 'Making of Nations'.

⁵⁸ For the same assumption elsewhere, see Henige, *Oral Historiography*, pp. 91–3.

⁵⁹ Pohl, 'Introduction — Strategies', p. 25; Pohl, 'Introduction: Ethnicity', p. 10. The same idea formed a central assumption of medieval origin legends of peoples: Reynolds, 'Medieval "Origines Gentium"', pp. 378–9 and 381.

⁶⁰ *HB* (Harl. 3859), §§10 and 17–18.

⁶¹ *HE* I.15.

⁶² See especially John, 'Point of Woden'; cf. Miller, 'Bede's Use of Gildas', p. 254 and n. 1; Dumville, 'Kingship', pp. 77–9; Keynes, 'Between Bede and the Chronicle', p. 58.

⁶³ As noted by Davis, 'Cultural Assimilation', p. 23. For the same process in early Irish genealogies, see Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', pp. 203–4.

⁶⁴ *Auraicept na nÉces* (canonical part), 1.1–14 (ed. and transl. Ahlqvist, pp. 47–8). For the dating, see Ahlqvist, *Early Irish Linguist*, pp. 18 and 36. For references to more recent work on *Auraicept na nÉces*, see Hayden, 'Anatomical Metaphor', pp. 23–5. For the place of this story in the development of Irish origin legends, see Carey, *Irish National Origin-Legend*, pp. 10–11. An apparently independent version of the story of Goidel Glas is found in Scottish sources: see Broun, 'Birth', pp. 10–11; Broun, *Irish Identity*, pp. 11–16.

by the interpolated verses in the early Leinster genealogical poems.⁶⁵ By no later than the twelfth century, Domnall mac Donnchada (d. 1113), king of Osraige, was given a pedigree explicitly tracing his lineage through Góidél Glas and on to Japheth son of Noah.⁶⁶ Examples such as these in Irish genealogical sources could be greatly multiplied due to the profusion of eponymous figures in the Irish genealogies who represent political and ethnic groups of differing magnitude.

Outside of Ireland, the integration of biblical, ethnic, royal and saintly genealogies was less advanced. In the context of northern Italy, one finds the genealogy of Theoderic the Great (d. 526), king of the Ostrogoths, proceeding from the dynastic eponym *Amal*, alleged great-grandson of *Gapt*,⁶⁷ as well as the retrograde pedigree of Rothari (d. 652), king of the Lombards, which is prefaced to the *Edictus Rothari*.⁶⁸ Yet neither of these pedigrees was ever deliberately connected to the genealogical scheme of the 'Frankish Table of Nations', possibly composed around the year 520 by a Byzantine author or, less probably, an author based in Ostrogothic Italy.⁶⁹ This text lists the various peoples who were descended from the three brothers Erminus, Ingou and Istio, including the Goths, who sprang from Erminus, and the Lombards, who sprang from Ingou. Nor was the Frankish Table of Nations ever used as a framework for the genealogical origins of the Frankish Merovingian kings, despite a Merovingian royal genealogy directly following the table in two early manuscripts.⁷⁰ The Frankish Table of Nations itself, however, was later integrated into biblical genealogy. One version of the table listed the three brothers Erminus, Ingou and Istio as sons of Alaneus, and it was this version that was developed further in the *Historia Brittonum*.⁷¹ The latter found two separate ways to trace the descent of Alaneus from Japheth son of Noah, one of which was adapted from the Irish genealogy of Góidél Glas.⁷²

⁶⁵ I simplify a complex process of development, imperfectly witnessed in extant texts; for detailed discussion, see Carey, 'Ancestry' and Jaski, "'We are of the Greeks in our Origin'". The *terminus ante quem* is based on the appearance of this long pedigree in *HB* (Harl. 3859), §17. For the additions to the early Irish genealogical poems, see Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', pp. 72–3; Carney, 'Dating', pp. 48–50; Ó Corráin, 'Irish Origin Legends', pp. 63–7; cf. Carey, 'Ancestry', p. 111 and n. 40. For a translation of one of the postulated additions, see Koch, with Carey, *Celtic Heroic Age*, pp. 56–7 (§68 'Núadu Necht', stanzas 34–52).

⁶⁶ *CGH* 15–17; cf. the extant pedigree of the Ciarraige Luachra, which is also traced back to Góidél Glas: *CGH* 287–8. Domnall mac Donnchada's pedigree is one of several pedigrees concerning the principal families of the Laigin and Osraige in the early twelfth century which are found at the beginning of the earliest manuscript preserving the corpus of early Irish genealogies, Rawlinson B. 502, written in Leinster perhaps around 1131: Ó Murchadha, 'Rawlinson B. 502', pp. 317–19 and 331.

⁶⁷ Jordanes, *Getica*, XIV.79–81 (ed. Mommsen, pp. 76–8; transl. Mierow, pp. 73–4). For commentary on the genealogy, see Pohl, 'Genealogy', pp. 236–8; Christensen, *Cassiodorus*, ch. 5, esp. p. 131; Heather, 'Cassiodorus', esp. p. 108; Moisl, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp. 219–23. *Amal*'s grandson *Ostrogotha* may have been perceived as an ethnonym, but he may nevertheless have been a real third-century person: cf. Pohl, 'Genealogy', p. 238.

⁶⁸ *Edictus Langobardorum* (ed. Bluhme, pp. 2–3; transl. Drew, p. 40); cf. Pohl, 'Genealogy', p. 239. Pohl misleadingly states that 'it is in fact not a royal genealogy but that of a high aristocrat who had become king seven years earlier'. However, the genealogy was recorded precisely because its subject was, by that point, royal and not merely aristocratic.

⁶⁹ Goffart, 'Supposedly "Frankish" Table of Nations', pp. 152–3 and 157–60; Wadden, 'Frankish Table of Nations', pp. 1–2. Goffart printed all witnesses to the text in parallel.

⁷⁰ As printed in Krusch, 'Catalogi', pp. 851 and 854; cf. Goffart, 'Supposedly "Frankish" Table of Nations', pp. 135–7.

⁷¹ Goffart, 'Supposedly "Frankish" Table of Nations', pp. 148–9 and 151, n. 78; Wadden, 'Frankish Table of Nations', pp. 2–3. See Wadden for a discussion of the dissemination of the Frankish Table of Nations in an Insular context.

⁷² *HB* (Harl. 3859), §§17–18; *EWGT* 125, nn. 17–18; Bartrum, 'Was there a British "Book of Conquests"?', p. 1; Carey, 'Ancestry', pp. 106–7 and 109–11; Thornton, 'Power', pp. 39–41 and 44–5; Jaski, "'We are of the Greeks in our Origin'", pp. 27–9; see too Chapter 5 below, p. 236.

It is rare to find all the constituent elements of early medieval genealogy together in a single text. Nevertheless, the ease with which successive writers of genealogy were able to move between genealogical subjects when elaborating upon the works of their predecessors is indicative of the extent to which such writers shared the same broad set of assumptions about the normative genealogical relationships that should exist between a king or saint and his people and between a people and biblical history. Although in many cases it was not specified, it was widely assumed that kings and saints derived from the most distinguished lineages within the ethnic group; the common ancestor of the ethnic group was in turn assumed to descend from the offspring of Noah.

Frankish Genealogy

The peculiar distinction of early medieval Insular literary genealogy can be thrown into sharper relief by comparing it with Frankish genealogy. Like their Insular counterparts, works with a significant genealogical component written in either Merovingian or Carolingian Francia were concerned exclusively with biblical, ethnic, royal or saintly subjects. For example, according to the mid-seventh-century Fredegar chronicle, the Franks were named after their eponymous leader Francio, a successor of both Frigas (from whom the Phrygians were named) and King Priam of Troy; when the Franks later elected their first king, Theudomer son of Ricimer, he is said to have been ‘ex genere Priami, Frigi et Francionis’ (‘from the family of Priam, Frigas and Francio’).⁷³ Although no specific line of descent is given to demonstrate Theudomer’s descent from Francio or the Trojans, the conceptual genealogical link was present. Texts of a more exclusively genealogical nature are very rare indeed in the Frankish world, but where they do exist, and concern contemporaries, they are almost invariably about Frankish kings.⁷⁴ The only surviving Merovingian example seems to have been written between 623 and 639, while Dagobert I was king of Austrasia, though it survives in a copy written in Freising around 818.⁷⁵ The text begins by tracing a genealogy of Roman kings forwards in time using the biblical *genuit* (‘begot’) formula. The Frankish Table of Nations is then inserted, which shows that the Romans and Franks were kindred peoples. Following this is a genealogy of Merovingian rulers, beginning with Chlodio and ending with Dagobert I. The biblical *genuit* formula is employed again. Although solely genealogical in content, this text could nevertheless be described as a king-list, since members of the Merovingian family are named only if they were kings of the Franks.⁷⁶

The exclusive concern with kings of the Franks may similarly be observed in genealogical texts from the Carolingian period.⁷⁷ The first text that constructs a genealogy for the Carolingians is Paul the Deacon’s account of the bishops of Metz, written in the

⁷³ Fredegar, *Chronicae*, III.2 and III.9 (ed. Krusch, pp. 93–5); cf. Reimitz, *History*, pp. 166–70; Wood, ‘Defining the Franks’, pp. 50–1. *Francio* in the Fredegar chronicle is an example of an ethnonym who was not envisaged as the ancestor of the entire ethnic group.

⁷⁴ Genicot, *Les généalogies*, pp. 18–19; 1985 suppl., pp. 3–6. The earliest aristocratic, as opposed to royal, genealogy from the Frankish world is the genealogy of Arnulf the Great (d. 965), count of Flanders, which in any case was designed to show Arnulf’s descent from the Carolingian emperor Charles the Bald via the latter’s daughter Judith, who married Arnulf’s paternal grandfather, Count Baldwin I: Witger, *Genealogia Arnulfi comitis* (ed. Bethmann, pp. 302–4); Friese, “‘Genealogia Arnulfi comitis’”; Duby, ‘French Genealogical Literature’, pp. 150 and 153.

⁷⁵ *Generatio regum* (ed. Krusch, ‘Catalogi’, p. 851); cf. Pohl, ‘Genealogy’, pp. 243–4; Reimitz, *History*, pp. 216–17; Goffart, ‘Supposedly “Frankish” Table of Nations’, pp. 135–6; Genicot, *Les généalogies*, pp. 15–16.

⁷⁶ Cf. Pohl, ‘Genealogy’, p. 244.

⁷⁷ For an overview, see especially Reimitz, ‘Anleitung’; for an important earlier contribution, see Oexle, ‘Die Karolinger’.

mid-780s at the behest of Angilram, bishop of Metz.⁷⁸ Paul endeavoured to demonstrate that Charlemagne was descended in the male line from the saintly Arnulf, a seventh-century bishop of Metz. Paul's genealogical account provided the basis for the more succinct genealogical text known as *Commemoratio genealogiae domni Karoli gloriosissimi imperatoris* ('Commemoration of the genealogy of the Lord Charles, the most glorious emperor'), written as part of an attempt to end the vacancy in the bishopric of Metz that lasted from the death of Angilram in 791 to the appointment of Gundulf by Louis the Pious in 816.⁷⁹ In this text, a further crucial step was taken: Arnulf's mother was identified as Blithild, a daughter of the Merovingian king Chlothar II (d. 629). The link is probably spurious, but it allowed subsequent Carolingian genealogical texts to trace an unbroken line of descent from the early Merovingian kings to the Arnulfing Carolingian line.⁸⁰ As in the Merovingian case, the central interest of the genealogical element of these texts is the transmission of kingship, even through the female line.

The Beginnings of Insular Literary Genealogy

Like Frankish genealogies, Insular genealogies were written according to biblical models. Also like Frankish genealogies, Insular genealogies concerned a prescribed range of subjects, which may be characterised as biblical, ethnic, royal or saintly, sometimes in combination. Yet there is an essential difference between Insular and Frankish genealogy. In the Insular world, genealogy became a literary genre circumscribed by its own forms and conventions. In Francia, this did not occur. Although genealogical information, sometimes plentiful in quantity, was routinely incorporated into texts of other genres (notably histories, saints' Lives and king-lists), genealogy did not emerge as a literary genre in its own right in early medieval Francia. There was no equivalent at all to the 'collections' of genealogies that were produced by the Irish, the English and the Britons.

Why the difference? One suspects that the pivotal factor was the nature of kingship in these societies. Among the Franks, Merovingian and Carolingian kingship was hegemonic; prior to the deposition and death of Charles the Fat in 887–8, there was little dissent from the discourse of Carolingian, and previously Merovingian, monopoly on royal legitimacy.⁸¹ Constance Bouchard has argued that it was the seizure of the kingship by the Carolingians following centuries of Merovingian rule that stimulated a new desire to conceptualise royal families as springing from long lines of male ancestors, since it was the first time since the fifth century that a new Frankish family was required to justify its royal status.⁸² This accounts for the new emphasis on agnatic lineage found in Paul the Deacon's *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*. However, in early medieval Ireland, and probably Anglo-Saxon England too, kings had been conceived as springing from long lines of male ancestors from no later than the second half of the seventh century. As in Francia, the only contemporaries who became the subjects of genealogies in this period were kings; but unlike in Francia, no single family had monopolised the royal title in either Ireland or England. Royal power in these societies, and especially in Ireland, was widely

⁷⁸ Paul the Deacon, *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* (ed. and transl. Kempf, pp. 72–9); cf. Pohl, 'Genealogy', pp. 244–5; Bouchard, 'Carolingian Creation', pp. 140–1; Bouchard, 'Images', pp. 298–300; Reimitz, 'Providential Past', pp. 127–9. For the text, see the introduction to Kempf's edition.

⁷⁹ *Commemoratio genealogiae domni Karoli* (ed. Waitz, pp. 245–6); cf. Pohl, 'Genealogy', p. 246; Reimitz, *History*, pp. 403–4. For the influence of the *Commemoratio* on subsequent genealogical writing, see Hummer, *Visions*, pp. 288–300.

⁸⁰ This may be seen clearly in *Genealogia regum Francorum* (ed. Waitz, pp. 246–7), which ends with the four sons of Louis the Pious: cf. Wood, 'Genealogy', pp. 242–3.

⁸¹ MacLean, *Kingship*, pp. 230–2.

⁸² Bouchard, 'Carolingian Creation'.

diffused. At any one time, there were far more contemporary kings who could become the subjects of written genealogies.⁸³

The plurality of kings in the Insular world would naturally have accelerated the production of royal genealogies; but there was an ethnic dimension too. As mentioned above, a vital component of ethnic identity in this period was the notion of shared descent from a common ancestor. This concept could be embodied by the king's pedigree, which by itself represented the many lesser lineages within the ethnic group. As Susan Reynolds has observed, 'some medieval writers do not seem to have distinguished the tracing of a king's genealogy from recounting the descent of his subjects'.⁸⁴ But when multiple kings presided over a single ethnic group, the group at large could only be represented by multiple kings' pedigrees. It did not matter so much whether those pedigrees visibly converged upon a single common ancestor, because the subjects of the pedigrees, as members of the same ethnic group, could be assumed, however distantly, to share a common descent. That royal genealogies were considered in exactly this way is strongly suggested by the parameters of the genealogical collections that were assembled among the Irish, the English and the Britons. As a matter of strict generic convention, these collections are each concerned with only a single ethnic group.⁸⁵ Despite their detail and complexity, the vast Irish genealogical collections do not contain a single pedigree tracing the ancestry of an English or Brittonic king. The same is true in English and Brittonic collections. The 'Anglian collection of genealogies and regnal lists' is concerned only with Anglian kings, in addition to the kings of Kent, which, at the time that the archetype of the Anglian collection was assembled in the reign of Coenwulf of Mercia (796–821), were firmly subjected to the Mercian king.⁸⁶ The Harleian genealogies are concerned only with Brittonic kings from western and northern Britain.⁸⁷ This is despite the fact that the *Historia Brittonum*, to which the Harleian genealogies are appended, contains several Anglo-Saxon genealogies derived from an early version of the Anglian collection.⁸⁸ But unlike the Harleian genealogies, the *Historia Brittonum* was not, by genre, a genealogical collection. A key convention of the literary genre of 'genealogical collection' among the Irish, English and Britons was thus that the scope of the collection should be defined ethnically. In a sense, this convention was a natural corollary of the genealogical collections' ultimate purpose: to represent the ethnic group through the high-status lineages of its kings.

⁸³ For the diffusion of kingship in seventh-century Ireland, see especially Byrne, *Irish Kings*, ch. 3; for England, see Kirby, *Earliest English Kings*, pp. 4–12; Dumville, 'Origins'. Important similarities and contrasts between Irish and English kingship in the seventh and eighth centuries are drawn out in Charles-Edwards, 'Early Medieval Kingships'.

⁸⁴ Reynolds, 'Medieval "Origines Gentium"', p. 390.

⁸⁵ The same is mostly true of collections of saints' genealogies, though the latter contain significant exceptions, such as St Germanus in *Bonedd y Saint* (*ByS* 61) and St Patrick in the Irish corpus of saints' genealogies (*Ó Riain, Corpus*, p. 1, §1). My thanks to Barry Lewis for pointing this out to me.

⁸⁶ Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', p. 24. Keynes also notes that Kentish pedigree might be considered 'Anglian' by virtue of its connection with the Deiran pedigree (both of which are uniquely traced back to *Uegdaeg Uodning*): 'Between Bede and the Chronicle', p. 57. Unlike Dumville ('Anglian Collection', p. 40; 'Kingship', p. 79), I am doubtful that the West Saxon pedigree was included in the archetype of the collection: cf. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, pp. 35 and 183, n. 71; Keynes, 'Between Bede and the Chronicle', pp. 58–9. For Coenwulf's domination of Kent, see Keynes, 'Control', pp. 113–18. For the earliest manuscript of the Anglian collection, also written during Coenwulf's reign, see Keynes, 'Between Bede and the Chronicle'.

⁸⁷ To avoid confusion with modern concepts, I use 'Brittonic' rather than 'British' as the adjective pertaining to the Britons. For the fate of Brittonic identity in Wales, see Pryce, 'British or Welsh?'. McKenna's discussion of these issues seems to underestimate considerably the continued potency of Brittonic identity among the Britons of Wales during the early Middle Ages, especially insofar as they continued to identify with the very real Britons still living and ruling in northern Britain just as strongly as with their Brittonic neighbours living west of Offa's dyke: McKenna, 'Inventing Wales'.

⁸⁸ Discussed in Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', pp. 45–50; Dumville, 'On the North British Section'.

Such an underlying purpose might account for why genealogical collections among the Irish, English and Britons all make substantial use of the vernacular languages. In all cases, Latin was an important supplementary language, but the primary languages used for describing the genealogical relationships between individuals were respectively Old Irish, Old English and Old Welsh.⁸⁹ This is another factor distinguishing genealogical collections from texts of other genres, which may or may not include genealogical information.⁹⁰ The ethnic imperative governing the scope of such collections thus manifested itself in language choice. To a far greater extent than on the Continent, ethnicity in early medieval Ireland and Britain was linked closely with language.⁹¹ Bede said as much when he explained that, in his own day, Christian study in Britain took place ‘quinque gentium linguis’ (‘in the five languages of the peoples’), namely the languages of the English, Britons, Irish, Picts and ‘Latins’.⁹² Each ethnic group was associated with, and thus partially defined by, its own language. If the purpose of a genealogical collection was to represent the ethnic group through its royal lineages, it would have seemed logical to use the language through which the group’s identity was partially constituted when writing the genealogical collection.

The contrasting relationship between ethnicity and kingship on either side of the English Channel is surely the reason for the paucity of written genealogies in Francia compared with the profusion of written genealogies in the Insular world. In early medieval Francia, prior to 888, there was at any one time only a single recognised royal family. The political history of the ethnic group could be recounted as the story of two successive royal families, Merovingian and Carolingian; there was no need to consider multiple contemporaneous royal lineages in relation to one another. In the Insular world, such comparison of royal lineages was essential for conceptualising the full political body of the ethnic group. This resulted in the production of genealogical collections. On the other side of the Channel, by the time that genealogy emerged as a more conspicuous genre of writing in the later eleventh century, the close relationship between genealogy, kingship and ethnicity had been undermined by the relatively weak authority of the French monarchy; the result was that most French genealogical writing of the eleventh and twelfth centuries concerned the great comital dynasties and their quasi-royal pretensions, rather than the royal dynasty itself.⁹³ There was no demand for collections of French royal genealogies.

Despite the relatively late date of the manuscripts (s. xii–), there is clear evidence that Irish royal genealogies began to enter the written record on a large scale in the second half of the seventh century.⁹⁴ In cases where the dynasties represented by those genealogies did not continue to prosper in later centuries, the genealogies sometimes survived in the forms in which they were written down in the seventh century, even in the manuscript collections of the twelfth century and later. This is particularly apparent with the genealogies of the Airgíalla in the north and the Eóganachta in the south.⁹⁵ It may have been around the same time that the first royal genealogies were written down in England. Although the evidence is slight, it may be significant that the *Historia Brittonum*’s version of the pedigree of the kings of Kent proceeds no further in time than Ecgberht (r. 664–73), whereas in the archetype of the Anglian collection it continued to Ecgberht’s grandson

⁸⁹ For the relative use of Latin and Old Irish in the Irish genealogies, see Ó Corráin, ‘Creating the Past’, pp. 193–6.

⁹⁰ Contrast the situation on the Continent, where the vernacular was not used to write genealogy before c. 1200: Genicot, *Les généalogies*, p. 43.

⁹¹ See the essential discussion in Charles-Edwards, ‘Making of Nations’. For the situation on the Continent in the early Middle Ages, see Pohl, ‘Telling the Difference’, pp. 22–7.

⁹² HE I.1.

⁹³ Genicot, *Les généalogies*, pp. 18–21; Duby, ‘French Genealogical Literature’.

⁹⁴ Ó Murchadha, ‘Rawlinson B. 502’, p. 325.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; Jaski, ‘Genealogical Section’, pp. 324–5.

Æthelberht (r. 725–62).⁹⁶ The same period may have been significant for the writing of genealogy among the Britons, though there is no direct evidence for this prior to the mid-eighth century, when a written version of the pedigree of the kings of Dyfed was incorporated into the early version of the Old Irish tale *Indarba na nDéisi* ('The Expulsion of the Déisi').⁹⁷ The lack of seventh- or eighth-century orthographic forms preserved in later Welsh genealogical texts might argue against such an early beginning for the writing of genealogy among the Britons.⁹⁸

With so many genealogies entering writing, it was inevitable that conventions should develop governing the shape of the records. These conventions are outlined in the following part of this chapter. What is remarkable is that, despite the complete absence of any common content between Irish, English and Brittonic genealogical collections for the reasons discussed above, they all share very similar generic conventions.⁹⁹ One could posit two possible reasons for this. Firstly, it could be the accidental result of three independent literary traditions encountering similar problems within similar cultural settings. Each tradition had access to the Bible as a repository of exemplary forms, and each people group conceived of kinship in a broadly similar fashion. Alternatively, it could be the result of mutual influence between the literary traditions. It has already been noted, for example, that the Anglian collection was known to the Britons, even if they chose not to include its content in their own genealogical collections. Overall, this second possibility seems the more likely of the two, especially given the well-known and extensive interactions between Irish and English (and especially Northumbrian) *literati* in the seventh century.¹⁰⁰ If one were compelled to posit the direction of influence, it would be impossible not to view the Irish as the originators of the genre. The corpus of early medieval Irish genealogy dwarfs those of the English and the Britons combined.¹⁰¹ The intellectual milieu of Ireland in the mid- to late seventh century, infused with biblical exegesis and the works of Isidore of Seville, would have provided the perfect environment for the formulation of the conventions of Insular literary genealogy.¹⁰² Moreover, the strong Irish influence on ecclesiastical matters in Northumbria in the seventh and eighth centuries, resulting, for example, in Bede's familiarity with Irish computistical texts, might explain the emergence of the literary genre of genealogy in England in a specifically Northumbrian context.¹⁰³ Judging by the *Historia Brittonum*, the Britons soon became aware of such developments from both Irish and English sources.

⁹⁶ *HB* (Harl. 3859), §58; Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', p. 29; cf. Dumville, 'Kingship', pp. 79–81.

⁹⁷ The pedigree appears in all four copies of the early version: Meyer, 'Expulsion of the Dessi'; Meyer, 'Expulsion of the Déssi'; Pender, 'Two Unpublished Versions'. The early version agrees with the Irish genealogical doctrines of the mid-eighth century: Jaski, 'Genealogical Section', pp. 326–7; Thornton, *Kings*, pp. 128 and 141–2. The section with the pedigree is edited and translated in *EWGT* 4. For commentary, see Guy, 'Earliest Welsh Genealogies', pp. 476–85; Thornton, *Kings*, ch. 5; Ó Cathasaigh, 'Déisi'.

⁹⁸ For seventh- and eighth-century Welsh orthography, see Sims-Williams, 'Emergence'.

⁹⁹ For a discussion of the structural conventions of early Irish genealogy, see Ó Corráin, 'Book of Ballymote', pp. 10–12.

¹⁰⁰ Edmonds, 'Practicalities'; Hughes, 'Evidence'.

¹⁰¹ For a dated but still useful introduction to the published early medieval Irish corpus, see Kelleher, 'Pre-Norman Irish Genealogies'; a useful and more recent introduction is Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, pp. 15–23. Essential analysis is provided by Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past'. The textual history of the Irish secular genealogies is largely unexplored, but for important preliminary discussions see MacNeill, 'Notes' and Jaski, 'Genealogical Section'. For the development of modern scholarship on the Irish genealogies, see Ó Muraile, 'Irish Genealogies' (expanded in Ó Muraile, *Irish Genealogies*). For a comprehensive bibliography of modern scholarly works on the Irish genealogies, see Ó Corráin, *Clavis* II, 989–1031. For an overview of early medieval English genealogy, see Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies'.

¹⁰² Cf. Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', pp. 199–204.

¹⁰³ For a recent and excellent discussion, see Stancliffe, 'Irish Tradition'; an earlier overview is Campbell, 'Debt'. For the influence of Irish computistical texts on Bede, see Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp.

Formal and Structural Conventions of Insular Literary Genealogy

There are two primary factors to consider when assessing the literary form of a genealogical text in the Insular tradition: the chronological direction and the pattern of convergence. There are two possible chronological directions: a genealogy can either be ‘ascending’, meaning that it traces ancestors backwards in time, or ‘descending’, meaning that it traces descendants forwards in time. The commonest form in the Insular world was the ascending genealogy, since it allowed the contemporary subject of the genealogy to be foregrounded. A simple variety of ascending genealogy is the linear pedigree, which traces a single line of a subject’s ancestors backwards in time. In genealogical texts containing multiple lines of descent that are related to one another, the points at which these lines converge should also be considered. If the purpose of a genealogy is to emphasise an individual’s status, then the lines of descent will converge upon that individual. Alternatively, if the purpose of a genealogy is to illustrate the relationships between several dynasties, then the lines of descent will converge upon the common ancestor of those dynasties. Genealogies of the latter type are sometimes called ‘segmentary’ or ‘branching’ genealogies, because they can show how a dynasty divided into multiple segments or branches over time.¹⁰⁴ Segmentary genealogies are often descending, though they can be ascending if, for example, a sequence of linear pedigrees converges upon the same common ancestor.

Descending Genealogies

The example *par excellence* of a descending linear genealogy is the genealogy of Jesus at the beginning of Matthew, already mentioned above.¹⁰⁵ In Insular literary genealogy, however, this form is uncommon outside of narrative contexts. This is because the distinction between a descending genealogy and an historical or literary text with a major genealogical component is often unclear. Descending genealogies that concern only a single lineage might bear little distinction from a king-list, or, when suitably annotated, from a chronicle or dynastic history.¹⁰⁶ Some of the Carolingian genealogies mentioned above fall into these latter two categories; an example from the Insular world is the ‘West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List’, a king-list with a prominent genealogical element.¹⁰⁷ Such texts are sometimes described as ‘genealogies’ even when their content is not primarily genealogical. Although descending genealogies of this type were not regularly incorporated into Insular genealogical collections, there are no firm criteria by which to place them categorically inside or outside of the literary genealogical tradition.¹⁰⁸

In a Brittonic context, a good example of the potential ambiguity of descending genealogies is provided by the *Historia Brittonum*. As mentioned above, the *Historia Brittonum*

CVIII–CXI; for caution about earlier claims that Bede was dependent on an Irish computus, see *ibid.*, pp. XXI–XXII (esp. n. 37), XXVIII, n. 55 and CVIII, n. 318. Earlier commentators have suggested that Irish genealogy influenced Anglo-Saxon practice: Sisam, ‘Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies’, pp. 328–9; Morris, *Age of Arthur*, p. 143; Dumville, ‘Kingship’, pp. 81 and 103.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Segmentary’: Thornton, *Kings*, p. 15; ‘branching’: Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, p. 360. Biblical scholars have distinguished between ‘linear’ and ‘segmentary’ genealogies, though they have not recognised the distinction between ascending and descending genealogies: Wilson, *Genealogy*, p. 9; Aufrecht, ‘Genealogy’, pp. 211–12; Punt, ‘Politics’, pp. 377–81. For segmentary/branching genealogies from the French-speaking world in the thirteenth century, see Croenen, ‘Princely and Noble Genealogies’.

¹⁰⁵ Matthew 1.1–16.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Spiegel, ‘Genealogy’.

¹⁰⁷ Dumville, ‘The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List: Manuscripts and Texts’; cf. Dumville, ‘The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex’.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Ó Corráin, ‘Irish Origin Legends’, p. 56.

drew on an early version of the Anglian collection of genealogies and regnal lists. The Anglian collection is comprised solely of ascending genealogies, but the author of the *Historia Brittonum* deliberately reversed the direction of most of them and presented them as descending genealogies, using the biblical *genuit* formula.¹⁰⁹ The descending form was more appropriate for the *Historia Brittonum*'s purpose. The Anglian collection is concerned with the royal status of past and present ruling kings, and so proceeds by listing the ancestors of those kings. The *Historia Brittonum*, on the other hand, attempts to create rudimentary historical narratives by tracing multiple lines of descent forwards in time, interspersing those lines of descent with historical notices taken from other sources. In doing so, some of the *Historia Brittonum*'s descending genealogies acquire the appearance of mini genealogical dynastic histories and sit uneasily within the genre of Insular literary genealogy. The relative distance of the *Historia Brittonum* from the literary genre of genealogy is also apparent from its reproduction of English royal genealogies, which are entirely unknown in Welsh genealogical collections proper prior to the fifteenth century.¹¹⁰

Descending Segmentary Genealogies

Following the model of the Bible, descending segmentary genealogies could perform quite a specific function within the Insular genealogical tradition.¹¹¹ They could be used to schematize the relationships between different dynasties or different branches (or 'segments') of a single dynasty. The dynasties themselves could be denoted by dynastic or territorial eponyms or some other representative figures, whose stated relationships with each other, described in a descending form, implicitly prefigured the relationships between their descendants at the time of writing. Descending genealogies are used in this way in the Bible, as seen in the following instance: 'Ruben primogenitus Israhel. Huius filius Enoch, a quo familia Enochitarum: et Phallu, a quo familia Phalluitarum' ('Ruben the firstborn of Israel. His sons were Henoch, of whom is the family of the Henochites: and Phallu, of whom is the family of the Phalluites').¹¹² As Donnchadh Ó Corráin has shown, biblical genealogies of exactly this type were a direct model for early Irish genealogists attempting to outline the relationships between different Irish dynasties.¹¹³ For example, the Irish genealogies describe the eponymous ancestors of the chief dynasties of the Laigin (Uí Dúnlainge and Uí Cheinnselaig) as brothers: 'In Bresal Bēolach-sa trā dā mac leis .i. Énna Nia 7 Labraid, de quibus Lugair [...] Énna Nia didiu is hē senathair Hūa nDūnlainge; Labraid immorro senathair Hūa Ceinselaig' ('That Bresal Béolach had two sons, namely Énna Nia and Labraid, from whom are the Lugair [...] Énna Nia, moreover, is ancestor of Uí Dúnlainge; Labraid, however, is ancestor of Uí Cheinnselaig').¹¹⁴ A more famous example of a descending segmentary genealogical text from elsewhere in the Gaelic world is *Miniugud Senchusa Fher nAlban*, which concerns the principal dynasties of the early medieval kingdom of Dál Riata.¹¹⁵ The text as it survives may have been assembled in the tenth century from diverse fragments, some of them possibly as old as the seventh

¹⁰⁹ *HB* (Harl. 3859), §§57–61; cf. Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp. 292–3; Jackson, 'On the Northern British Section', pp. 23–4; Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, pp. 31–2.

¹¹⁰ For a fifteenth-century example, see LIIG (GO) G12.

¹¹¹ Cf. Punt, 'Politics', pp. 377–8. For an overview of the features of descending genealogies in the Bible, see Malamet, 'Tribal Societies'.

¹¹² Numbers 26.5. For comparison, see the detailed analysis of the descending genealogies in Genesis 36 in Wilson, *Genealogy*, pp. 167–83.

¹¹³ Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', pp. 204–6.

¹¹⁴ *CGH* 72–3.

¹¹⁵ Dumville, 'Ireland' (text at pp. 56–8); Bannerman, *Studies* (text and translation at pp. 41–9).

century.¹¹⁶ The many resulting internal contradictions in the text prevent one from offering any coherent explanation of its purpose or political perspective. That said, the text's branching genealogical structure should encourage the supposition that the latest dateable figures mentioned (the latest is Conall Crandomna, d. 660) were not living at the time of writing, but rather were representative of the kindred groups descended from them.

Descending segmentary genealogies could be used to schematize the relationships between different branches of important dynasties in later medieval Wales too. Several examples are found in the thirteenth-century Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies. One descending segmentary genealogy in that text outlines the royal and aristocratic lineages springing from the various sons of the ninth-century Welsh king Rhodri Mawr.¹¹⁷ Other segmentary genealogies form significant components of the section of the text that I call *Bonedd y Llwythau*, the purpose of which is to schematize the relationships between the most prominent land-holding families of Gwynedd in the early thirteenth century.¹¹⁸ One segmentary genealogy in *Bonedd y Llwythau*, concerning the branches of a family holding land in the cantref of Rhufoniog, assumes an appearance very similar to that of the biblical and Irish genealogies examined above (LIIG 60.1):

Tri meib Hed ap Alunawg: Meudyr a Gwillofon a Gwrgi.
Plant Meuter ap Hed: gwyr Llanfair Dalhayarn.
Plant Gwillofon ap Hed: gwyr Dyffryn Elwy.
Plant Gwrgi ap Hed: gwyr Nanthaled.

The three sons of Hedd ab Alunog: Meudyr, Gwillofon and Gwrgi.
The children of Meudyr ap Hedd: the men of Llanfair Talhaearn.
The children of Gwillofon ap Hedd: the men of Dyffryn Elwy.
The children of Gwrgi ap Hedd: the men of Nant Aled.

Although the Bible no doubt continued to exert its influence on genealogical writing throughout the Middle Ages, there is a strong probability that the branching genealogies in the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies were modelled on earlier Insular genealogical exemplars.

Ascending Genealogies ('Pedigrees')

Across the early medieval Insular world, ascending genealogies were more common than descending genealogies. The simplest form of ascending genealogy is the linear pedigree, where a single line of ancestors is traced back in time using repeated filial terms like Latin *filius* or Old Welsh *map* (both 'son'). This is the form assumed by the pedigree of Rothari, king of the Lombards, which is prefixed to the *Edictus Rothari*. The nature of the ascending pedigree is helpfully described in the *Historia Brittonum*, when it introduces the pedigree of the kings of Buellt and Gwerthrynion, traced back to Vortigern: 'Haec est genealogia illius, quae ad initium retro recurrit' ('this is his [i.e. Vortigern's] genealogy, which runs backwards to the beginning').¹¹⁹ Even in the ninth century, therefore, ascending pedigrees were perceived to go backwards in time towards a beginning represented by some significant ancestor. As with descending genealogies, the Bible provided precedence for ascending

¹¹⁶ Dumville, 'Ireland', pp. 67–8.

¹¹⁷ LIIG 28, discussed in Charles-Edwards, 'Dynastic Succession', pp. 72–3 and Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 362–3.

¹¹⁸ See below, pp. 208–11.

¹¹⁹ *HB* (Harl. 3859), §49.

genealogies. A particularly lengthy example is found in Luke 3.23–38, where Christ's pedigree is traced backwards to Adam son of God, rather than forwards, as in Matthew.

In early medieval Insular genealogy, the primary purpose of an ascending pedigree was to demonstrate the royal status of the pedigree's subject. This could be achieved by showing that the subject descended from former kings and from one or more royal progenitors. This function of ascending pedigrees is aptly described at the beginning of the twelfth-century *Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*. The text begins with a sequence of ascending genealogies converging upon Gruffudd, the subject. The genealogies are introduced with the following statement: 'Prosapia quidem quam nobili ac regia oriundus erat Gruffinus cum paterna tum materna quemadmodum genealogiae recto ordine a parentibus deductae monstrant' ('From how noble and regal a lineage Gruffudd stemmed, both on the paternal and maternal side, the corresponding genealogies, derived from his ancestors in direct line, demonstrate').¹²⁰ Later, the genealogies are summarised with the statement that 'Quum huc usque delibauimus generis nobilitatem' ('So far we have presented the nobility of his race').¹²¹ The text is quite clear: Gruffudd's pedigrees establish neither the descent of property through his family nor his absolute right to rule any particular kingdom. Rather, they serve to dispel any doubt about his *generis nobilitas*. Whether or not Gruffudd was a king, he was certainly of kingly stock and, according to the writer, eminently eligible to hold the kingship of Gwynedd.

The single-minded focus of early medieval ascending pedigrees on the royal status of their subjects is underscored by the role of gender in the pedigrees. Since early medieval kingship was usually reserved for men, the vast majority of individuals named in early medieval royal pedigrees are male. In other words, the default mode of the early medieval pedigree is agnatic. A comment on this circumstance is found in the *Life of St Winwaloe*, written by the Breton *Wrdisten*, abbot of Landévennec, around 870, who deliberately omitted Winwaloe's sister from his discussion of the family 'quia feminarum non est moris genealogiam in scripturis texere' ('because it is not the custom to construct the genealogy of women in writing [or perhaps 'Scripture']').¹²² Nevertheless, women were occasionally included in status genealogies if they enabled the male subjects of the pedigrees to be traced back to more prestigious ancestors.¹²³ As we have seen, Carolingian genealogists enthusiastically adopted Blithild into the Carolingian pedigree in order to portray the royal status of the Carolingians as directly continuing the royal status of the Merovingians. In the Harleian genealogies, one finds three examples of the same phenomenon in the two status pedigrees traced back from Owain ap Hywel Dda, king of Deheubarth (d. 988). In the first (HG 1), Owain's line is traced back through the two dynasties that had ruled Gwynedd in the preceding few centuries, joined together through his great-great-great-grandmother Epyllt. In the second (HG 2), Owain's line is traced back through the two dynasties which, in addition to his own, had ruled Dyfed in the preceding few centuries, joined together through his mother Helen (d. 928) and great-great-grandmother Tangwystl. These pedigrees do not prove Owain's right to rule either Gwynedd or Dyfed, but they do endeavour to show that Owain's royal status derived from his descent from former kings of Gwynedd and Dyfed. For the latter purpose, demonstrations

¹²⁰ *VGC* §2.

¹²¹ *VGC* §7.

¹²² *VS Winwaloei*, I.2 (ed. De Smedt, p. 176); cf. Fleuriot, 'Old Breton Genealogies', p. 5. For the dating of the *Life*, see Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*, p. 413. Ironically, one of the few early medieval genealogies concerning a woman survives in a Breton context. Appended to a charter dated to 869 in the Cartulary of Redon is a nine-generation descending linear genealogy tracing a line of descent from one *Iedechael* (possibly the seventh-century king of Domnonée) to *Roiantdreah*, a widow who, through the charter, made King Salomon of Brittany her heir: *Cartulary of Redon*, no. 109 (ed. De Courson, pp. 82–3); cf. Fleuriot, 'Old Breton Genealogies', p. 5. For discussion, see Brett *apud* Brett, Edmonds and Russell, *Brittany*, ch. 6.

¹²³ Cf. Pohl, 'Genealogy', p. 248; Wood, 'Genealogy', p. 252.

of descent through key female ancestresses could be just as effective as demonstrations of purely agnatic descent.

The derivation of high status through female ancestresses seems to have been accorded especial importance in a Welsh context. Alex Woolf has commented on the way that, in the early Middle Ages, the Irish and English seem far more reluctant than the Britons to trace the lineages of their kings back through female links.¹²⁴ In later centuries, moreover, Welsh genealogists developed a specific format for organising ascending pedigrees of this kind, which became known as *achau'r mamau* ('pedigrees of the mothers').¹²⁵ Such pedigrees converge upon a specified subject, whose status is thereby emphasised. First, the agnatic pedigree of the subject is given. Next comes the agnatic pedigree of the subject's mother. Following this, other agnatic pedigrees are traced back from other notable female ancestresses of the subject, such as grandmothers and great-grandmothers. According to this format, the kindred is still defined agnatically, but female relatives, through their offspring, can provide bridges between different agnatic kindreds. *Achau'r mamau* thus not only emphasise the status of their subject, but also draw attention to the various kindreds with which the subject was affiliated through marriage.¹²⁶ This may be seen in the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies in the pedigrees traced back from Einion ap Gwalchmai, Llywelyn's poet and court official (Figure 1.1). There are seven in total: Einion's own agnatic pedigree, traced back to Cunedda Wledig; Einion's mother Genilles's pedigree, traced back to an *uchelwr* of Powys; and five other pedigrees traced back through Einion's other female ancestresses. These seven pedigrees organised by *mamau* succeed in demonstrating Einion's descent from some of the most important royal and aristocratic dynasties of Gwynedd and Powys.

Ascending Segmentary Genealogies and Insular Genealogical Collections

In the Insular tradition of literary genealogy, ascending pedigrees were often grouped together in genealogical collections. As mentioned above, genealogical collections like these are not found on the Continent in the early Middle Ages. The collections are ethnically bounded, in that they never include pedigrees concerning the kings of other ethnic groups. Within their own ethnic groups, however, the collections are generally inclusive, and might incorporate genealogical material taken from several sources concerning different kingdoms or territories. Given the rivalries between such kingdoms and territories, it was inevitable that decisions regarding the juxtaposition and relative ordering of the pedigrees should have been treated as meaningful. As much meaning could be encoded in the structure and arrangement of genealogical collections as in the individual pedigrees. This is suggested by the columnar layout employed in the manuscripts of early Irish, English and Brittonic genealogical collections, which allow the eye to view multiple pedigrees in relation to one another comparatively easily.¹²⁷ As a literary composition, the genealogical collection was intended to be encountered visually rather than aurally.

The same conventions pertaining to the arrangement of a group of pedigrees as part of a putative 'ascending segmentary genealogy', converging upon a common ancestor, may be seen operating across different Insular genealogical traditions. It was conventional to begin

¹²⁴ Woolf, 'Pictish Matriliny', pp. 150–2. For an example from a Scottish context that illustrates this reluctance, see Broun, 'Genealogy', pp. 211–12.

¹²⁵ F. Jones, 'Approach', p. 326.

¹²⁶ *EIWK* 207–9; Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 363–4.

¹²⁷ The columnar layout is represented respectively in the editions of *CGH*, Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', pp. 28–37 and Phillimore, '*Annales Cambriae*', pp. 169–82. For the significance of the visual aspect of the Anglian collection, see Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp. 326–8; Dumville, 'Kingship', pp. 89–90.

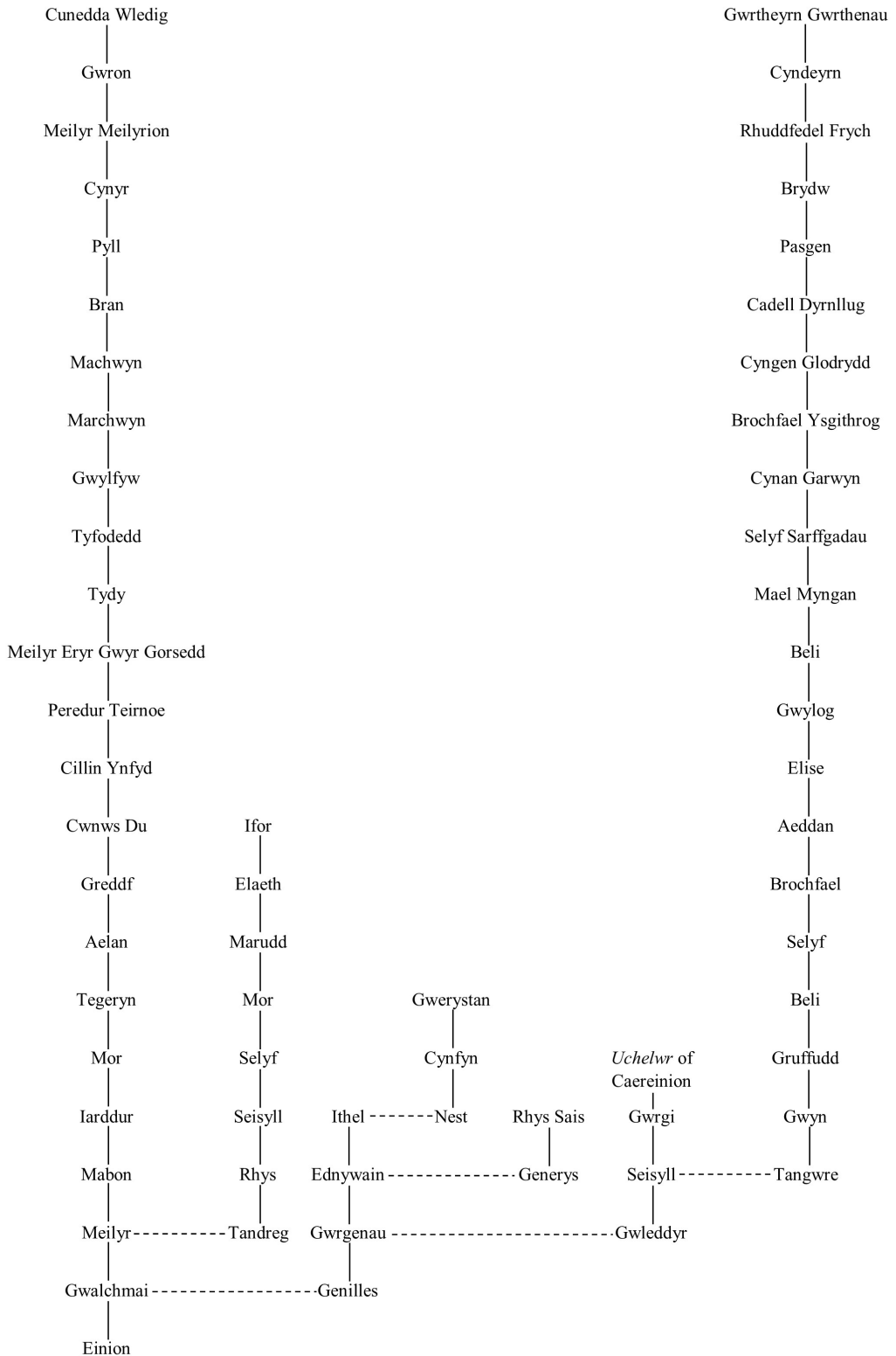


Figure 1.1: Einion ap Gwalchmai's ancestry through achau'r mamau

with the pedigree that traced back the agnatic ‘stem’ of a kingdom’s royal family through the longest possible line. Subsequent pedigrees could then be traced back only so far as they needed to go in order to join the main stem of the former pedigree, so as not to repeat names unnecessarily. The same system can be observed in different genealogical collections written in northern Britain. The Anglian collection, for example, begins with five pedigrees that are labelled as ‘Norðanhymbra’ (‘of the Northumbrians’) (Figure 1.2). The first traces the Deiran line of Edwin (r. 616–32) back to Woden; the second traces the Bernician line of Ecgfrith (r. 670–85) back to Woden; the third and fourth (under the same heading) trace the Bernician lines of Ceolwulf (r. 729–37) and his cousin Eadberht (r. 737–58) back to Ocg son of Ida, the latter of whom had already been listed in Ecgfrith’s pedigree; and the fifth traces the Bernician line of Alhred (r. 765–74) back to Eadric, another alleged son of Ida.

A genealogical collection concerning the royal lines of Alba and Dál Riata in what is now Scotland, preserved in several versions in different manuscripts, is structured in exactly the same way (Figure 1.3).¹²⁸ An early stage in the evolution of this collection may be dated to 995 × 997, during the reign of Causantín mac Cuilén, king of Alba.¹²⁹ At this stage, the text began with a long pedigree traced back from Causantín mac Cuilén through the earlier line of Cenél nGabráin. This was followed by a shorter pedigree of Cináed mac Mail Choluim (r. 971–95) and his brother Dub (r. 962–6), previous kings of Alba from another branch of the dynasty, traced back only so far as Cináed mac Alpín, the common ancestor shared with Causantín mac Cuilén.¹³⁰ These pedigrees were then followed by the tract known as *Cethri Primchenéla Dál Riata*.¹³¹ That the latter was perceived as a component of the same textual unit as the preceding pedigrees in the redaction of 995 × 997 is shown by the first pedigree in *Cethri Primchenéla Dál Riata* being a ‘branch’ pedigree of Cenél nGabráin traced back only so far as Áedán mac Gabráin, where it meets the ‘stem’ of Causantín mac Cuilén’s pedigree.¹³² After this are two pedigrees pertaining to Cenél Loairn, both, like the pedigrees of Ceolwulf and his cousin Eadberht, placed under the same heading: the first traced back to Erc mac Echach Munremair, where it meets the stem of Causantín’s pedigree, and the second traced back to Báetán, where it meets the preceding Cenél Loairn pedigree. Finally come two pedigrees tracing lines associated with Cenél Comgaill and Cenél Oengusa respectively, each of which joins the main stem with different alleged sons of Erc mac Echach Munremair. Thus, in both the Anglian collection and the Scottish collection, the redactors responsible for the structuring of the collections shaped the pedigrees according to what must have been the pre-established conventions of the genealogical genre.

The same structural pattern can be observed in the Brittonic Harleian genealogies. The first pedigree traces the lineage of Owain ap Hywel Dda through Einion Yrth ap Cunedda and on to Beli Mawr and his consort Anna (HG 1). Subsequent pedigrees concerning branches of the same macro-dynasty trace the lines only so far as Cunedda, where they join the stem of the first pedigree (HG 3, 17, 18, 26). Again, another pedigree traces the lineage of the kings of Strathclyde and Alclud back through Dyfnwal Hen to a certain *Fermap Confer* (HG 5). The following two pedigrees, however, trace the lines only so far as

¹²⁸ See especially Broun, ‘*Cethri Primchenéla*’. For convenience, I refer to this collection altogether as the ‘Scottish genealogical collection’.

¹²⁹ I follow the textual history for this tract proposed by Dauvit Broun in a forthcoming publication. I am very grateful to Dauvit Broun for sharing this work with me prior to publication. For the Irish manuscript contexts of Scottish genealogies, see Ó Muraile, ‘Irish Genealogical Collections’.

¹³⁰ The subjects of the first two pedigrees in the 995 × 997 redaction of the collection are maintained in the Book of Leinster (TCD 1339 (H.2.18)); see CGH 426. The earlier version of Causantín’s ‘long pedigree’ is preserved in TCD 1298 (H.2.7), part i (Uí Mhaine, southern Connaught, s. xiv^{med}), Bannerman’s MS ‘H’, printed in Bannerman, *Studies*, pp. 65–6.

¹³¹ *Cethri Primchenéla Dál Riata* is edited from all witnesses in Dumville, ‘*Cethri Primchenéla*’.

¹³² This important observation was first made in Broun, ‘*Cethri Primchenéla*’, pp. 66–7.

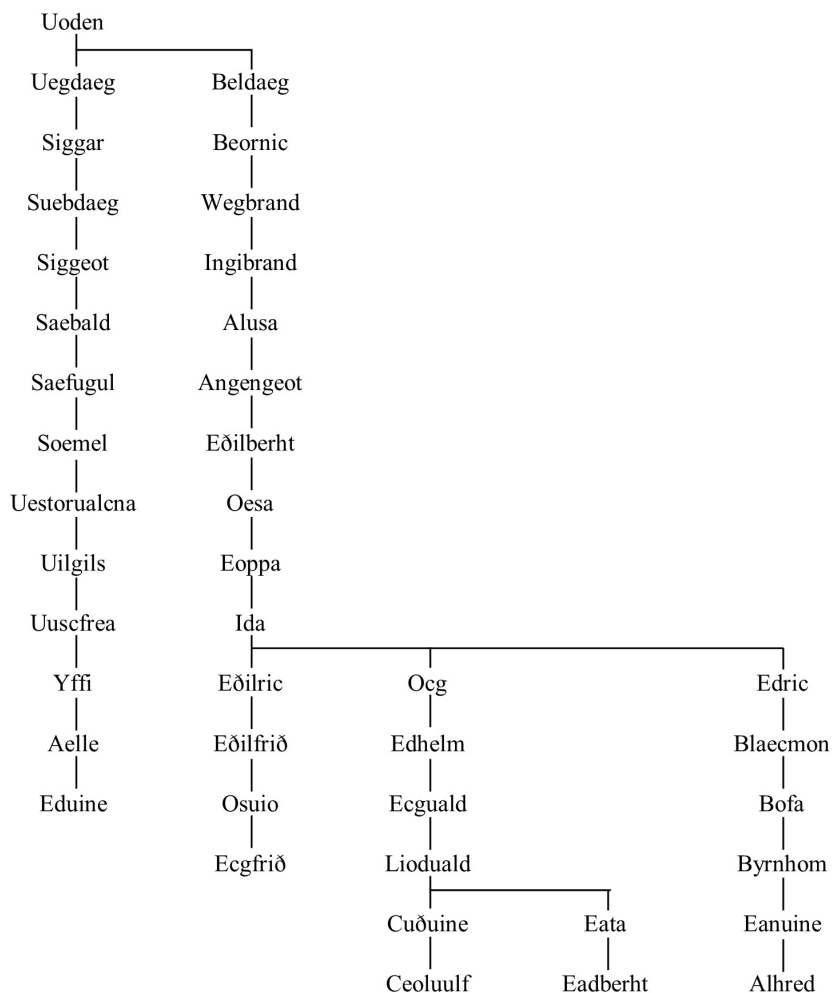


Figure 1.2: The Northumbrian pedigrees in the Anglian collection of royal genealogies and regnal lists (Cotton Vespasian B. vi)

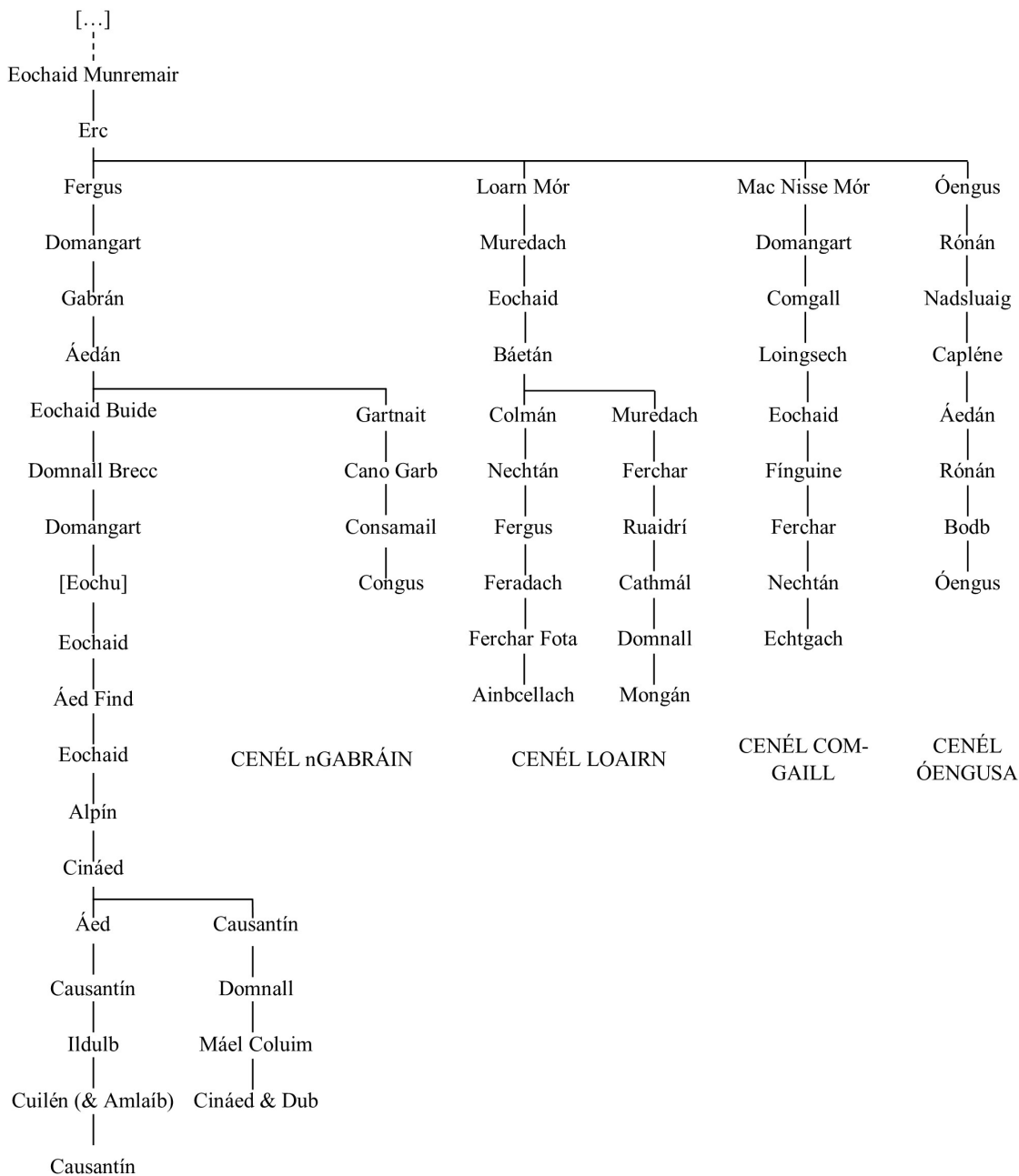


Figure 1.3: The pedigrees in the Scottish genealogical collection of 995 × 997 (TCD 1298 (H.2.7), part i and the Book of Leinster)

Dyfnwal Hen, where they join the main stem of the preceding pedigree (HG 6 and 7). Other parallels between the structuring of the Harleian genealogies and the Anglian collection are discussed in Chapter 2.¹³³

The selection and arrangement of the pedigrees' subjects within these sequences of pedigrees could imply distinct political messages. In the Anglian collection, it is clear that the first five pedigrees were intended to show the interconnected lineages of successive kings of Northumbria in the seventh and eighth centuries. The political implication is that the latest Northumbrian king mentioned, Alhred, had the appropriate royal status to rule the kingdom. The pedigrees are nevertheless selective, omitting Oswiu's son Aldfrith (r. 685–704) and Aldfrith's two sons Osred (r. 705–16) and Osric (r. 718–29), as well as Alhred's immediate predecessor Æthelwold Moll (r. 759–65). The lineage of Aldfrith and his sons may have been omitted because of a pre-existing perception that Aldfrith was illegitimate.¹³⁴ That of Æthelwold Moll, however, may have been omitted due to an active attempt by a partisan of Alhred to deny the legitimacy of his rival Æthelwold Moll as a member of the royal dynasty.¹³⁵

More complex political messages are encoded in the Scottish genealogical collection of 995 × 997. The structure of the text implies that it consists of at least two distinct chronological layers. The later layer, belonging to the 995 × 997 phase of redaction, comprises the stem pedigree of Causantín mac Cuilén and the branch pedigree of his predecessors Cináed and Dub. These two pedigrees follow the same structural principle as the Northumbrian pedigrees, though they are arranged the other way around: they show the descent of the ruling king of Alba first and the descent of the ruling king's predecessors from another line second.¹³⁶ The earlier layer of the text, probably belonging to the first half of the eighth century, comprises a collection of pedigrees illustrating the principal royal dynasties of Dál Riata.¹³⁷ Comprehension of this early stage of the text is hindered by the fact that, in its present context, the first pedigree of the eighth-century layer of the text is a branch pedigree of Cenél nGabráin that is dependent on the stem of the tenth-century pedigree of Causantín that precedes it. The original eighth-century text must have begun with a contemporary Cenél nGabráin stem pedigree, probably from the same branch of the dynasty that is represented by the extant tenth-century stem pedigree, but the eighth-century version of the pedigree was omitted from the tract of 995 × 997 so as not to repeat material incorporated into the tenth-century stem pedigree. The subject of the original eighth-century stem pedigree is uncertain. Broun has quite reasonably argued that it was Eochaid mac Echach, who ruled

¹³³ See below, pp. 62–3.

¹³⁴ Dumville suggested that Aldfrith and his sons were omitted from the Anglian collection because of ecclesiastical concern that Aldfrith was illegitimate: 'Ætheling', p. 27; 'Kinship', p. 76. Charles-Edwards postulated that Aldfrith may have been illegitimate in the sense that Oswiu had never formally acknowledged his paternity to the Northumbrian nobility: 'Anglo-Saxon Kinship', pp. 182–3. More recently, Fraser has argued that assertions of Aldfrith's illegitimacy were ultimately political in inspiration: Fraser, *From Caledonia*, pp. 217–18 and 267–9.

¹³⁵ Cf. Keynes, 'Between Bede and the Chronicle', p. 57. Since the pedigree of Æthelwold Moll is not recorded, it has been claimed that he was an aristocrat of non-royal descent: e.g. Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', p. 49; Dumville, 'Ætheling', p. 27. However, as Kirby has rightly observed, Æthelwold Moll himself may indeed have claimed royal descent, regardless of what a genealogist partisan to Alhred was willing to record: Kirby, *Earliest English Kings*, p. 126.

¹³⁶ I disagree with Broun's view that Causantín was the only living person in the text because he was head of Clann Chináeda meic Ailpín, unlike his contemporaries, the sons of Cináed and Dub: 'Cethri Primchenéla', pp. 69–70. As in the Northumbrian example, Cináed and Dub were the subjects of the second pedigree not because their sons were not heads of the kindred, but because Cináed and Dub were themselves former kings of Alba.

¹³⁷ For differing views about the political history of Dál Riata in this period, see Dumville, 'Political Organisation'; Fraser, *From Caledonia*; Sharpe, 'Thriving'.

Dál Riata from 726 to 731 and died in 733.¹³⁸ This leaves the puzzle as to why the subject of the first Cenél Loairn pedigree is Ainbhellach mac Ferchair Fota, who ruled Dál Riata briefly from 697 to 698 and was later killed in battle by his brother Selbach in 719. The first Cenél Loairn pedigree could instead have begun with Selbach himself, who ruled after Ainbhellach, or indeed Selbach's son Dúngal, whom Eochaid mac Echach ousted from the kingship of Dál Riata in 726. Broun suggests that Ainbhellach is the subject because he would have been understood to represent his descendants, and more particularly his son Muiredach, king of Cenél Loairn, during Eochaid's reign. But it might be better to interpret Ainbhellach's pedigree as a statement not about the kingship of Cenél Loairn, but about the kingship of Dál Riata. The text's omission of Selbach and Dúngal was very probably the product of a political decision to erase the memory of Eochaid's immediate rivals from the genealogical record (just as with the omission of Æthelwold Moll, the immediate rival of Alhred, from the Anglian collection). Ignoring Selbach and Dúngal, as the text does, Ainbcellach's pedigree could be understood to represent the lineage of a former king of Dál Riata from a line other than that of Eochaid, in the same way that the tenth-century pedigree of Cináed and Dub represents the lineage of former kings of Alba from a line other than that of Causantín, and the other Northumbrian pedigrees in the Anglian collection represent the lineages of former kings of Northumbria from lines other than that of Alhred.¹³⁹

Considering the two chronological layers together, it is striking that, during the 995 × 997 phase of redaction, only the stem pedigree of Cenél nGabrain was updated; the other pedigrees seem to have been copied out exactly as they were found. The resulting impression of the arrangement is that, by the late tenth century, Cenél nGabráin was the only dynasty of Dál Riata that remained royal, even if the precise form assumed by the pedigrees of the other dynasties was the product of their original redaction early in the eighth century rather than late-tenth-century manipulation on behalf of the contemporary kings of Alba.¹⁴⁰

The political messages communicated by the Anglian collection and the Scottish collection can also be found in the Harleian genealogies. As is argued at length in Chapter 2, the text is probably comprised of at least two distinct chronological layers, the first belonging to the second half of the ninth century and the second to the mid-tenth century. As with the comparable Scottish genealogies, the pedigrees that were important to the mid-tenth century compiler were updated (namely the two pedigrees of Owain ap Hywel Dda, HG 1–2), whereas the other pedigrees were ignored. However, at the earlier stage, it seems that the first sequence of pedigrees in the collection was intended to show the interrelationships between successive kings of certain kingdoms, as in the Anglian collection. Thus, while the first pedigree probably originally traced the descent of Rhodri Mawr, king of Gwynedd and perhaps also of the Isle of Man, subsequent pedigrees (HG 3 and 4, probably the original second and third pedigrees of the collection) trace the descent of former kings of Gwynedd (Hywel ap Caradog, d. 825) and probably Man (Idwal ap Tudwal). It is likely that the ninth- and tenth-century Brittonic genealogists responsible for these arrangements were just as aware of the conventions governing the writing of literary genealogy as their counterparts

¹³⁸ Broun, 'Cethri Primchenéla', pp. 70–2.

¹³⁹ This interpretation of Ainbcellach's pedigree need not be extended to the other pedigrees in *Cethri Primchenéla Dáil Riata*, whose subjects may have been contemporary subordinates of Eochaid rather than his predecessors in the kingship of Dál Riata. Perhaps the special treatment of Ainbhellach's pedigree was the reason that Cenél Loairn, unlike Cenél Comgaill and Cenél Óengusa, was given two pedigrees rather than one. The otherwise unknown subject of the second Cenél Loairn pedigree may have been a contemporary subordinate of Eochaid.

¹⁴⁰ At a slightly later stage, the royal lines of Mael Snechta, king of Moray (d. 1085) and Mac Bethad, king of Alba (r. 1040–57), were artificially derived from Cenél Loairn using the two Cenél Loairn pedigrees in *Cethri Primchenéla Dáil Riata*: Chadwick, *Early Scotland*, p. 96, n. 1; Woolf, 'Moray Question', pp. 148–9; Broun, 'Genealogy', pp. 231–4. These pedigrees are printed in *CGH* 329–30 from Rawlinson B. 502, with variants from the Book of Leinster.

among the Irish and the English, especially since there was probably more literary genealogy in circulation at that time than has survived today.

If the form and structure of the genealogical collections examined above can be ascribed to literary influences, can the same be said about the content? To ask this question is to enter a broader debate about the nature and origins of early medieval literary traditions, particularly with regard to whether widespread linguistic communities could and did preserve 'native' traditions from the ancient past through oral transmission.¹⁴¹ Léopold Genicot, for instance, argued that the idea of exalting kings through genealogies derived from Celtic and Germanic traditions, even though he admitted that aspects of their presentation were affected by Roman and biblical influences.¹⁴² Others, such as David Dumville and Donnchadh Ó Corráin, have sought to emphasise the Roman and biblical elements of the genealogies and downplay the notion that they preserve Celtic and Germanic oral traditions.¹⁴³ However, it would be misleading to exaggerate the irreconcilability of these points of view. Most commentators acknowledge that, to some extent, written genealogies have been subjected to influences from multiple quarters. The formal parallels examined above strongly suggest that the Bible was the ultimate exemplar for written genealogy and may have inspired the writing of contemporary genealogies in the first place. Royal, saintly and ethnic genealogies could be connected to the universal web of kinship described in such detail in the Bible. But all of this in no way obviates the fact that early medieval genealogists, however literate and steeped in Christian learning, drew freely on culturally specific historical and literary discourses made known to them as much through oral as through written channels of transmission. This is not to say that early medieval genealogies 'accurately' reproduce timeless traditions belonging to transnational ethnolinguistic groups that some call 'Celtic' or 'Germanic'; in any case, such traditions were infinitely mutable and liable to be reinterpreted according to historical circumstances of time and place. But it was inevitable that figures linked to vernacular myths and legends which were known across widely dispersed linguistic communities would find expression in genealogies constructed from a position of ethnic awareness, especially when there existed a desire to identify the specific place of the perceived ethnic group within the broader scheme of biblical genealogical history.¹⁴⁴ Even on a local scale, although a genealogy of the ruling dynasty might be written down according to biblical precedents and established literary conventions, that genealogy would not be authoritative if certain sections of it did not accord with what was collectively understood by the political community to constitute the ruling dynasty's proper and appropriate lineage. In other words, pervasive popular knowledge of aspects of significant genealogies imposed limits on literary invention and manipulation. Such popular knowledge was by no means necessarily 'accurate', since it was a reflex of communal belief and expectation, which were mutable and open to manipulation. But its existence in one form or another should caution us from considering literary genealogy through a solely literate lens. The interaction between literary and common genealogy was ongoing and complex.

¹⁴¹ Cf. McCone, *Pagan Past* (ch. 10 for consideration of the Irish genealogies); Frank, 'Germanic Legend'; Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans?'.

¹⁴² Genicot, *Les généalogies*, pp. 14–17; the same view informs Moisl, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies'.

¹⁴³ Dumville, 'Kingship', p. 96; Ó Corráin, 'Irish Origin Legends'; Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', esp. pp. 188 and 204–5; Thornton, 'Orality', pp. 83–4; Keynes, 'Between Bede and the Chronicle', p. 60; Pohl, 'Genealogy', p. 232; cf. Genicot's response to Dumville: *Les généalogies*, 1985 suppl., pp. 3–6.

¹⁴⁴ For recognition of this in a Germanic context, cf. Anlezark, 'Sceaf', p. 17; Frank, 'Germanic Legend', pp. 92–5; Hill, 'Myth'.

Literary Genealogy in Medieval Wales

The tradition of writing genealogy in medieval Wales emerged from the Insular tradition of literary genealogy. Many of its forms, structures and conventions are paralleled in early medieval Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England. But from shared beginnings, the tradition of literary genealogy developed in different directions within each cultural milieu, according to local political, cultural and social conditions. As elsewhere, the most significant influence on genealogical writing in medieval Wales was the nature and composition of the Welsh political community, especially when considered in relation to those responsible for the writing of genealogy.

Welsh Poets and the Performativity of Genealogy

Before outlining the chronological development of the Welsh tradition of literary genealogy over time, it is necessary to consider the relationship between genealogy and Welsh poets or bards. It has sometimes been claimed that the poets were the chief preservers of Welsh genealogical traditions.¹⁴⁵ The claim is not without some measure of evidence. Gerald of Wales commented on the interest of the Welsh bards in genealogical matters:¹⁴⁶

Hoc etiam mihi notandum videtur, quod bardi Kambrenses, et cantores, seu recitatores, genealogiam habent praedictorum principum in libris eorum antiquis et authenticis, sed tamen Kambrice scriptam; eandemque memoriter tenent, a Rotherico magno usque ad beatam Virginem, et inde usque ad Silvium, Ascanium, et Eneam; et ab Enea usque ad Adam generationem linealiter producent. Sed quoniam tam longinqua, tam remotissima generis enarratio, multis trutanica potius quam historica esse videretur, eam huic nostro compendio inserere ex industria supersedimus.

Yet it seems to me notable that Welsh bards, singers or reciters have a genealogy of the aforementioned princes in their old and authentic books, written, however, in Welsh; and they retain this in memory, from Rhodri Mawr to the blessed Virgin, and thence back to Silvius, Ascanius and Aeneas; and from Aeneas back to Adam they trace the descent linearly. But because an exposition of descent so distant and remote might seem to many to be more fictitious than historical, we have with due diligence omitted to include it here in our treatise.

In this anecdote, Gerald is commendably precise about the nature of the contact that he had observed between poets and genealogy. The passage refers to a single pedigree found in more than one manuscript, which can be identified from the details provided as the long pedigree of the princes of Gwynedd and Deheubarth developed in the twelfth century.¹⁴⁷ This particular pedigree was devised in a Latinate and ecclesiastical context, as evidenced by its inclusion of elements from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum* and from classical and biblical genealogy. One might therefore speculate that the 'old and authentic books' used by the poets had been written in ecclesiastical institutions, or at least copied from ecclesiastical exemplars. Nevertheless, the poets did not rely solely on the written record. Instead, they apparently thought it appropriate to memorise the genealogy, biblical elements and all. This passage is direct evidence for the influence of literary genealogy on bardic tradition, not vice versa. But it does suggest that genealogy was a natural subject of bardic interest.

¹⁴⁵ Especially by Rachel Bromwich: 'Character', pp. 92–8; 'Early Welsh Genealogies', p. 176.

¹⁴⁶ *Descriptio* I.3; cf. Guy, 'Gerald', pp. 51–2.

¹⁴⁷ Guy, 'Gerald', pp. 52–5; for more detail, see Chapter 5 below, pp. 235–43.

Bardic interest in genealogy is evidenced more directly by the Welsh court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Court poets often invoked the prestigious ancestors of their patrons in order to personalise their eulogies and draw attention to the distinction of their patrons' lineages.¹⁴⁸ Good examples are provided by poems for Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170) and the Lord Rhys ap Gruffudd of Deheubarth (d. 1197) by Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr.¹⁴⁹ Hywel and Rhys were closely related in several ways, and in both poems Cynddelw mentions his patrons' descent from their common grandfather Gruffudd ap Cynan and from the eponym of their shared agnatic dynasty (the Merfynion), Merfyn Frych.¹⁵⁰ In the poem to the Lord Rhys especially, Cynddelw refers to several distant ancestors in order to praise Rhys's Merfynion heritage.¹⁵¹ Cynddelw also draws attention to the respective associations of his patrons with Gwynedd and Deheubarth by singling out ancestors who, while common to both patrons, were especially affiliated with only one of the relevant kingdoms.¹⁵² Other references, however, do not appear so calculated, as with the references to Hywel's Powysian forebearer Cyngen (probably Cyngen Glodrydd but possibly Cyngen ap Cadell) and Rhys's Powysian forebearer Cadell (probably Cadell Dyrnllug but possibly Cadell ap Brochfael); in the first case, it is not even clear whether Cynddelw envisaged Cyngen as Hywel's ancestor or merely as an apt figure for comparison.¹⁵³

Another example provides direct evidence for bardic knowledge of literary genealogy, as mentioned by Gerald. In a poem (or possibly series of poems) by Gwalchmai ap Meilyr in praise of Owain Gwynedd, no less than nine of Owain's ancestors are specifically named in reverse order: his three immediate agnatic predecessors Gruffudd, Cynan and Iago; Rhodri Mawr; the early kings of Gwynedd Rhun Hir, Maelgwn Gwynedd, Cadwallon Lawhir and Einion Yrth; and finally Aeneas.¹⁵⁴ Each chronological sequence of ancestors begins a new awdl.¹⁵⁵ The most striking feature of the poem in terms of its genealogical frame of reference is its mention of Aeneas. This can only mean that Gwalchmai was aware of exactly the pedigree found in the bardic books known to Gerald, for there was no other pedigree that traced the relevant line back to Aeneas.¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, the same pedigree is again connected to the bards in a comment embedded in one of the Mostyn genealogies (MG 1). The comment probably dates no earlier than the reign of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d. 1282) and could even have been inserted by the scribe of the Mostyn genealogies in the first half of the fourteenth

¹⁴⁸ Owen, 'Noddwyr', pp. 75–6 and 93. For an index of the personal names found in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Welsh court poetry, see Owen, 'Mynegai', pp. 25–37.

¹⁴⁹ CBT IV, poems 6 and 9 respectively.

¹⁵⁰ CBT IV, poems 6.18 ('essillit Gruffut'), 6.132 ('kyhauwl Meruyn'), 9.181 ('Hil Gruffut'), 9.230 ('hil ma(vr)ut Meruyn').

¹⁵¹ CBT IV, poem 9.33 ('o hil Anaravd', i.e. Anarawd ap Rhodri), 9.177 ('Hil Coelig', i.e. Rhodri Mawr's agnatic ancestor Coel Hen), 9.179 ('Hil Rodri', i.e. Rhodri Mawr); cf. 9.183 ('Hil Maelgwn', i.e. Maelgwn Gwynedd).

¹⁵² For Gwynedd: CBT IV, poem 6.110 and 6.299 ('hil Run', i.e. Rhun ap Maelgwn), 6.133 ('hil Idwal', i.e. probably Idwal Foel, but possibly Idwal ap Meurig or Idwal Iwrch). For Deheubarth: CBT IV, poem 9.139 ('Aergwl gadarnwch', i.e. Aergol Lawhir). However, any perception that Hywel ab Owain, like Rhys, descended from Aergol Lawhir may have depended on whether or not Hywel's great-great-grandmother Iwerydd ferch Cynfyn was understood to be the daughter of Angharad ferch Maredudd: contrast LIIG 12.2.4 and BT (PR) 1113 [1116]. Other kingdom-specific ancestors were definitely not common ancestors of both patrons: 6.123 ('ucheluab Ywein', i.e. Hywel's father Owain Gwynedd) and 9.184 ('Hil Tevdvr', i.e. Rhys's grandfather Tewdwr Mawr).

¹⁵³ CBT IV, poems 6.45 ('kedernyd Kyngen'), 9.176 ('Hil Cadell').

¹⁵⁴ CBT I, poem 8.1, 2, 19, 27, 53–5 and 57; also Idwal at 8.65.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Owen, 'Noddwyr', p. 93.

¹⁵⁶ See below, p. 240. Did Gerald meet Gwalchmai (fl. c. 1130–c. 1180) or one of the latter's sons during his journey through North Wales in 1188? Is it relevant that, in the next generation, the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies seem to have been compiled under the aegis of Gwalchmai's son Einion, who had access to a copy of this same pedigree?

century.¹⁵⁷ It is observed that there is a difference in the pedigree of the kings of Gwynedd between Geoffrey of Monmouth's idiosyncratic version, where Maelgwn Gwynedd's son is called Einion ('herwyd yr Istoria', 'according to the History'), and the mainstream version associated with the bards, where Maelgwn Gwynedd's son is called Rhun ('herwyd dull y beird', 'according to the manner of the bards'). What is tantalisingly unclear is why the writer associated the mainstream version with the bards. Was it because the writer knew bards who owned books like those seen by Gerald, and apparently Gwalchmai too? Was the writer aware of poems like Gwalchmai's poem in praise of Owain Gwynedd, which does indeed mention Rhun ap Maelgwn? Or had the writer heard bards reciting pedigrees in some public context?

These genealogically rich poems by Cynddelw and Gwalchmai are exceptional among twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poems. In most surviving poems, although there are frequent references to ancient heroes as figures for comparison, there is little sustained attention to patrons' genealogies beyond some predictable references to the most famous and prestigious ancestors. Indeed, there are occasional genealogical references in the court poetry that may suggest that the bards did not always have a specific line of descent in mind when they invoked a patron's 'ancestor'. In one poem, composed, according to its editors, to celebrate Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's coming of age in 1187–8, Prydydd y Moch calls Llywelyn 'dreic keneu Kynlas' ('dragon descendant of Cynlas').¹⁵⁸ The reference is probably to Cynlas Goch of the Rhos line of kings of Gwynedd, who is possibly to be identified with Gildas's *Cuneglasus*.¹⁵⁹ There is no known line of descent through which Llywelyn could have claimed descent from Cynlas Goch. It is certainly possible that such a line of descent was recognised in Llywelyn's time but happens not to have survived in written form. But another possibility is that, in the context of the poem, Llywelyn's alleged descent from Cynlas Goch is evoked simply to imply that Llywelyn would be a legitimate ruler of the cantref of Rhos, and not because Prydydd y Moch was aware of a specific pedigree that could support the claim. Even if Prydydd y Moch did know such a pedigree, many members of his audience probably would not have done, but would nonetheless have believed the claim and understood its meaning.

In general, the court poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries suggest that the Welsh poets were familiar with the most prominent aspects of their patrons' pedigrees and were aware of the territorial associations of important ancestral figures, but did not necessarily possess a detailed and encyclopaedic knowledge of Welsh genealogy on a broader scale. They would certainly have memorised individual pedigrees, as Gerald attests, but there is no indication that they could have recited from memory all the genealogical matter found in literary genealogical collections. The latter point is supported by the nature of the extant collections, which, as demonstrated at length in the following chapters, relied in the first instance on earlier textual sources for non-contemporary genealogies. Individual pedigrees within the collections would, for the most part, have originated as 'oral' genealogies known to the relevant dynasties and their adherents, including not least their praise poets, but such pedigrees would have been context-specific and strictly contemporary in purview. Poets would have memorised and transmitted pedigrees according to need, but there was little impetus for them to memorise the pedigrees of dynasties that were not of immediate political relevance for them. Such pedigrees were only preserved for posterity if they were written down; many examples suggest that these written versions subsequently became authoritative precisely because of the absence of enduring 'oral' alternatives. We are aware of ninth- and tenth-century Welsh genealogies

¹⁵⁷ As discussed in Chapter 5, a Latin version of MG 1 is preserved in Exeter 3514, but the comment under consideration is absent from that version: see below, p. 245.

¹⁵⁸ CBT V, poem 18.10.

¹⁵⁹ Gildas, §32; for discussion, see Jackson, 'Varia: II. Gildas', pp. 33–4; Dumville, 'Gildas', pp. 57–9; Thornton, *Kings*, pp. 81–2. For Cynlas in the Rhos pedigree, see Table A.4.7.3.

because they were written down in the ninth and tenth centuries; ninth- and tenth-century poets may well have memorised some of them, but those pedigrees would not have been transmitted orally in an unchanging form to the poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁶⁰ The latter would instead have memorised genealogies relevant to their own contexts, such as the twelfth-century pedigree described by Gerald. They would only have been aware of earlier genealogies through writing. Medieval Welsh poets had greater reason than most people in society to learn royal and aristocratic pedigrees, but there is little to suggest that it was ‘the duty of the bards to preserve and to transmit them’.¹⁶¹ As discussed below, it was only in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in an entirely new social context, that Welsh poets became the primary agents of Welsh genealogy.

This conclusion begs a more profound question concerning the performativity of genealogy. Was genealogy ever ‘performed’ orally, and, if so, did the orally performed genealogies correspond with the genealogies found in literary manuscripts? An elegy to Owain Goch ap Gruffudd (d. 1282) by Bleddyn Fardd provides some impression of what a performative rendition of a genealogy might look like:¹⁶²

Hil Gruffut waew rut, rotuaŵr eurllaŵ,
Hael uab Llywelyn, llyw Aberffraŵ,
Hil Yoruerth cannerth, kein wallaŵ—reuuet,
Hil Ywein Gwynet, haelon gwynaw,
Hil gŵraŵl breinhyaŵl brenhin Manaw,
Hil Madaŵc uodaŵc, uyd eitunaŵ,
Hil Mareduŵt draŵs, haŵt drostaŵ—ledkynt,
Hil eduynt Bletynt, bleit ymŵryaw.

Lineage of Gruffudd of reddened spear, great-gifted his bountiful hand,
Generous son of Llywelyn, leader of Aberffraw,
Lineage of Iorwerth and his protection, finely distributing riches,
Lineage of Owain Gwynedd, lamenting for generous men,
Lineage valiant and royal of the king of Man,
Lineage of steadfast Madog, beseeching the world,
Lineage of mighty Maredudd, easy is the mourning for him,
Lineage of wise Bleddyn, a wolf battling.

Figure 1.4 illustrates the relationships between Owain Goch and the people mentioned in the poem. The first four lines trace Owain Goch’s agnatic pedigree back four generations to his powerful namesake Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170). The fifth line is probably a reference either to Owain Goch’s agnatic ancestor Merfyn Frych, who was probably king of Man before acquiring the kingship of Gwynedd,¹⁶³ or to the alleged descent of Gruffudd ap Cynan’s mother Rhanillt from the same dynastic progenitor as the twelfth- and thirteenth-century kings of Man, a relationship that one section of the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies was specifically designed to highlight.¹⁶⁴ The last three lines then draw attention to Owain

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Ó Corráin, ‘Creating the Past’, p. 189.

¹⁶¹ Bromwich, ‘Early Welsh Genealogies’, p. 176.

¹⁶² CBT VII, poem 48.17–24.

¹⁶³ See the discussion in Chapter 2, pp. 69–70.

¹⁶⁴ LIIG 16.1; cf. Broderick, ‘Irish and Welsh Strands’, pp. 33–6; Thornton, ‘Genealogy’, pp. 94–6. For the development of the relationship between the kings of Gwynedd and Man in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see McDonald, *Manx Kingship*, pp. 63 and 101–7; O. W. Jones, ‘O Oes Gwrtheyrn’. Might this line in the poem account for the spurious tradition, which first surfaces in the work of Gutun Owain (LIIG (GO) G40.3), that the mother of Owain Goch and his brothers was an otherwise unknown Rhanillt daughter of Rognvaldr Guðrøðarson, king of Man (r. 1187–1226, k. 1229)? The tradition is rejected in Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 37–9.

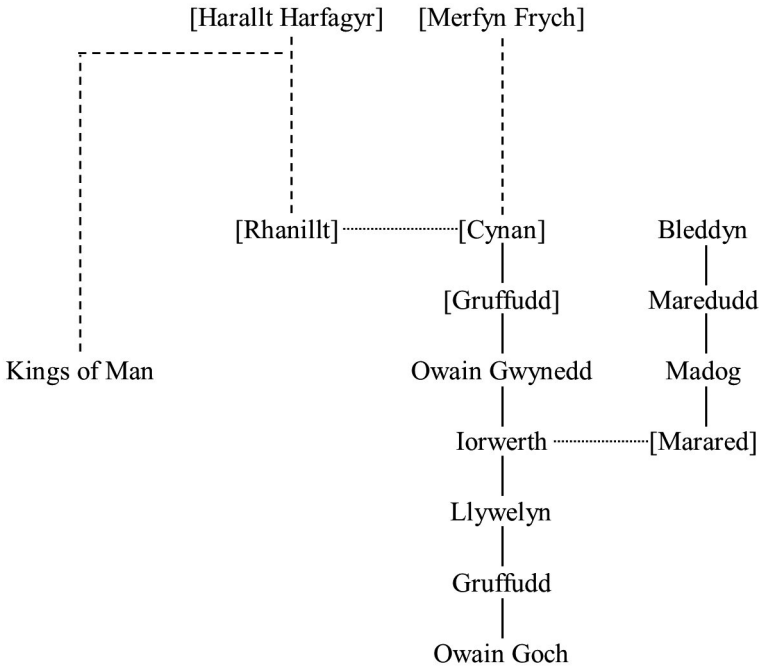


Figure 1.4: Bleddyn Fardd's poetic genealogy of Owain Goch

Goch's descent through Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's mother Marared ferch Madog from Madog ap Maredudd, king of Powys, and the latter's father Maredudd and grandfather Bleddyn ap Cynfyn. This is an excellent example of how the bare genealogies found in literary genealogical collections might be rendered in a fashion appropriate for oral performance. However, in the corpus of twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry, this poem is almost unique in its sustained enumeration of the generations of a patron's pedigrees.¹⁶⁵ Most contemporary praise poems are not performative genealogies.

One possible context for the performance of non-poetic pedigrees is royal inauguration. The only direct evidence for this idea comes from an account of the inauguration of Alexander III, king of Scots, on 13 July 1249, preserved in a text known as '*Gesta Annalia I*', which may have been first assembled in 1285.¹⁶⁶ It has been argued that this account reproduces a contemporary description of the ceremony.¹⁶⁷ Dauvit Broun has reconstructed the relevant part of this description as follows:¹⁶⁸

Et ecce, peractis singulis, quidam Scotus montanus, ante thronum subito genuflectens, materna lingua regem inclinato capite salutavit, dicens: *Benach De, Re Albanne, Alexander mac Alexander mac Uleyham mac Henri mac Daid*, et sic pronuntiando regum Scottorum genealogiam usque in finem legebatur.

¹⁶⁵ The closest analogue is perhaps another poem by Bleddyn Fardd in praise of Dafydd ap Gruffudd ab Owain Brogyntyn, which traces Dafydd's agnatic descent back four generations to Maredudd ap Bleddyn: CBT VII, poem 55.

¹⁶⁶ *Gesta Annalia*, §§47–8 (ed. Skene, *Johannis de Fordun Chronica*, pp. 293–5); cf. Broun, 'New Look'. For the same idea in seventeenth-century Scotland, see Bannerman, 'King's Poet', pp. 132 and 137, n. 6.

¹⁶⁷ Broun, *Scottish Independence*, pp. 170–9.

¹⁶⁸ Broun, *Scottish Independence*, pp. 177–8; Broun, 'Genealogy', p. 219. I follow Broun's translation.

And behold, after they one by one were finished, a certain highland Scot, kneeling suddenly before the throne, greeted the king in the mother tongue, bowing his head, saying: *Bennachd Dé, ri Albanach, Alexannar mac Alexannair meic Uilleim meic Énri meic David* [Blessings of God, king of Scots, Alexander son of Alexander son of William son of Henry son of David], and by proclaiming in this way read the genealogy of the kings of Scots to the end.

In the extant text, a long pedigree has been inserted from an external source, demonstrating Alexander's descent from none other than the Irish eponym Goidel Glas.¹⁶⁹ Presumably this was the implication of the genealogy being read 'to the end'. It is striking that, even in this context, the pedigree was allegedly read out rather than recited from memory, even though the certain 'highland Scot' has been identified as the king's poet, analogous to the bards who attended the king's court in medieval Wales.¹⁷⁰

Broun has supposed that the recitation of the king's pedigree by the royal poet was a long-established feature of royal inauguration in Scotland.¹⁷¹ Can a similar scenario be posited for medieval Wales? There is no direct evidence that this was the case. Nor is there any evidence for it in Ireland or in Germanic-speaking contexts.¹⁷² However, there is very little evidence for royal inauguration in medieval Wales at all, meaning that, in this case, absence of evidence cannot necessarily be taken as evidence of absence.¹⁷³

The only positive indication that Welsh pedigrees may have been recited orally is the presence of certain literary devices in the prehistoric sections of some significant royal pedigrees. The names in the 'invented' portions of such pedigrees sometimes form sequences of rhyming or alliterating pairs. Consider, for example, the prehistoric section of the pedigree of the kings of Gwynedd, as found in the Harleian genealogies (probably preserving the form of the ninth-century Gwynedd collection of genealogies), when alternate names are set out in two columns:

Cein	Guorcein
Doli	Guordoli
Dumn	Gurdumn
Amguoloyt	Amguerit ¹⁷⁴
Oumun ¹⁷⁵	Dubun
Brithguein	Eugein
Aballac	Amalech
Beli Magnus/Anna	

There have been few attempts to explain this phenomenon. Nicholson suggested that this section of the pedigree was originally a king-list, which used the preposition *guor* ('over,

¹⁶⁹ The pedigree is edited in Broun, *Irish Identity*, pp. 183–7.

¹⁷⁰ Bannerman, 'King's Poet'; cf. Jenkins, 'Bardd Teulu'.

¹⁷¹ Broun, 'Genealogy', pp. 221–2.

¹⁷² FitzPatrick, *Royal Inauguration*, p. 8; Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies' p. 323. For an overview of royal inauguration in the early Middle Ages (with no reference to genealogy), see Nelson, 'Inauguration Rituals'.

¹⁷³ Cf. Walters, 'Comparative Aspects', pp. 386–8.

¹⁷⁴ The nasal contraction mark in this name is expanded as 'Anguerit' by Phillimore, though he expresses uncertainty as to the correct expansion: '*Annales Cambriae*', p. 170, n. 4. There is much variation between *n* and *m* in later copies of the pedigree. I prefer to expand with *m* here because of the pairing of the name with *Amguoloyt*.

¹⁷⁵ This name, abbreviated as *Oumú* in the manuscript, is perhaps better preserved in the St Cadog genealogies (*VS Cadoci*, §47) as *Oumiud*, since every other version of the pedigree ends with either *t* or *d* (except Harley 673's *Onuec*, which is clearly a miscopying of *Onuet*). A Welsh scribe of one of Harley 3859's exemplars may have been encouraged to abbreviate *Oumiud* as *Oumú* (implying *Oumun*) precisely because of the resulting rhyme with *Dubun*.

above') to express 'before'.¹⁷⁶ For instance, he understood the successive names *Cein*, *Guorcein*, *Doli* to mean 'Cein; before Cein, Doli'. He pointed out that the Pictish cognate of *guor*, namely *ur* or *uur*, was used to construct just such a table of succession in the Pictish king-list.¹⁷⁷ Rather dubiously, some subsequent commentators have seen in this phenomenon evidence for a Pictish section of the Gwynedd pedigree.¹⁷⁸

Significantly, the same phenomenon may be observed in a ninth-century West Saxon context. In the pedigree of the West Saxon king Æthelwulf in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, R. W. Chambers noticed that the names between Cerdic, the progenitor of the West Saxon dynasty, and Woden, the common ancestor of most Anglo-Saxon dynasties, form perfectly alliterating verse, achieved through the pairing of alliterating names in the pedigree.¹⁷⁹ In his view, this showed that the pedigree of Cerdic derived from pre-literate times. However, Kenneth Sisam and, more recently, Thomas Bredehoft have shown that the alliterating sequence of names is more likely to be an innovation of the ninth century than an archaism preserved from an earlier period.¹⁸⁰ An earlier form of the Cerdic to Woden pedigree is probably preserved in the genealogical collection in CCC 183 and in Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, both of which contain fewer names and do not display the same alliterative pattern.¹⁸¹

This may suggest that prehistoric pedigrees formed from pairs of alliterating and rhyming names were deliberate innovations that were characteristic of Insular literary genealogy in the early Middle Ages. This can be understood as a local manifestation of the much broader phenomenon whereby pedigrees can be lengthened, and thus made more culturally prestigious, by inserting duplicated names into them.¹⁸² The Insular practice of doubling names through alliterating or rhyming pairs can also be observed in prehistoric sections of Irish pedigrees.¹⁸³ Other early Welsh pedigrees preserve the same feature. Pairs of alliterating and rhyming names are found in the prehistoric sections of those versions of the pedigree of the kings of Dyfed that are specifically dateable to the ninth or tenth centuries (HG 2; LIIG 38.1),¹⁸⁴ as well as in ninth- and tenth-century pedigrees associated with the royal dynasties of Powys and Brycheiniog.¹⁸⁵ There is therefore no need to appeal to a lost king-list to explain artificial pairs of names like *Cein/Guorcein* in the Gwynedd pedigree; the *Guor*- forms could have been adduced as a means of doubling the names either through analogy with names like

¹⁷⁶ Nicholson, 'Dynasty', pp. 65–7.

¹⁷⁷ Nicholson, 'Dynasty', p. 66, n. 1; Nicholson, *Keltic Researches*, pp. 49–50 and 50, n. 1.

¹⁷⁸ Chadwick, *Early Scotland*, p. 149; Jackson, 'Britons', p. 79; Alcock, *Arthur's Britain*, p. 128; Koch, 'Loss', pp. 219–20; Koch, *Gododdin*, p. xcvi; Koch, *Cunedda*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁹ ASC (AD) 855; (BC) 856; Chambers, *Beowulf*, pp. 316–17; cf. Hill, 'Woden'.

¹⁸⁰ Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp. 300–7; Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, pp. 20–3. Bredehoft also argued that, compared with the earlier Anglo-Saxon genealogies found in Cotton Vespasian B. vi, which he believes to be written in metrical verse, the Cerdic–Woden section of the West Saxon pedigree contains metrical innovations that may be found in other pedigrees composed in the milieu of the West Saxon court in the late ninth century.

¹⁸¹ Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', p. 34; Asser, §1. Bredehoft concluded, against Sisam and Dumville, that even this earlier form of the Cerdic–Woden pedigree was the work of the late-ninth-century chronicler of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: *Textual Histories*, pp. 34–5; cf. Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp. 291 and 305 (who argues that the earlier version of Cerdic's ancestry was concocted in Egbert's reign, 802–39); Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', pp. 39–40 (who argues that the earlier version was part of the archetype of the Anglian collection, supposedly written in 796).

¹⁸² Henige, *Oral Historiography*, p. 99.

¹⁸³ Consider the following pairs of names in Goidel Glas's pedigree, as reported, for instance, by the expanded text of *Auraicept na nÉces*, ll. 181–6 (ed. Calder, p. 14): *Ethecht/Aurtecht*, *Abodh/Aoi*, *Ara/Iara*, *Sru/Esru*, *Boath/Riafath* (elsewhere *Ibath*).

¹⁸⁴ In HG 2, note *Clotri/Gloitguin*, *Nimet/Dimet*, *Protec/Protector*, *Ebiud/Eliud*. For the dating of these versions, see Guy, 'Earliest Welsh Genealogies', pp. 477–85.

¹⁸⁵ For Powys, see *ibid.*, p. 473; for Brycheiniog, note the pairs *Ruallawn/Idwallawn* and *Rigeneu/Rein* (OW *Regin*) in the invented portion of the tenth-century genealogy preserved in JC 8: *ibid.*, pp. 475–6.

Guorthigirn (i.e. Vortigern) or indeed through knowledge of king-lists like those surviving from Pictland. Another method seems to have been to alternate between spellings for the fricatives /β/ (spelled *b*) and /μ/ (spelled *m*), as in *Oumun/Dubun*, *Aballac/Amalech*.¹⁸⁶ Is it possible that the deliberately literary approach to the invention of prehistoric pedigrees for royal dynasties was stimulated by the need to recite those pedigrees, conceivably at events like royal inaugurations? Or was it merely a device to lengthen the pedigrees in such a way as to make them more memorable? It may be significant in this respect that the practice is most noticeable in the pedigrees of the Merfynion kings of Gwynedd and Dyfed, who may have had a heightened awareness of the need to legitimise their power in public contexts.

Even if certain pedigrees were recited in public contexts like royal inauguration ceremonies, it is important to recognise that only a small proportion of the literary genealogy surviving from medieval Wales would have been appropriate for this purpose. In the massive thirteenth-century genealogical collection that I term the 'Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies', only the long pedigree of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (LIIG 11.1), perhaps in addition to some of the royal pedigrees in the section called *Bonedd Gwehelaethau Cymru* (LIIG 29–46), would have sufficed for inauguration ceremonies. By contrast, the sections of the text that follow Llywelyn's pedigree, which describe in convoluted detail the many children of Llywelyn's grandfather, great-uncles and great-grandfather (LIIG 12–15), would have been singularly unsuited to recitation, let alone in the context of a royal inauguration.¹⁸⁷ It is essential to recognise that most of the components of major genealogical texts like the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies were intended to be read, not heard; indeed, structural factors lent meaning to the genealogies that would have been more apparent to the reader than the listener. Such written genealogies should be contrasted with Bleddyn Fardd's poem for Owain Goch, or indeed with the early Irish Leinster genealogical poems, probably composed no later than the early seventh century; though genealogical in content, these were performative by virtue of being poems, not by being genealogy.¹⁸⁸ Certain individual pedigrees might, like poems, have been constructed for oral performance, but the majority of written genealogies were not.

Chronological Development

Literary genealogy in medieval Wales surfaces in the extant record in the eighth and ninth centuries. In the middle of the eighth century, a written copy of the pedigree of the kings of Dyfed, tracing their line back around two centuries, was taken to Ireland and incorporated into the Old Irish prose text *Indarba na nDéisi*.¹⁸⁹ Other isolated examples emerge in the early decades of the ninth century. The inscription on the Pillar of Eliseg begins with a five-generation pedigree of Cynge ap Cadell, king of Powys (d. 856).¹⁹⁰ In the *Historia Brittonum* there is a pedigree of the kings of Buellt and Gwerthrynion traced back to Vortigern, which may have been copied from an earlier written source.¹⁹¹ Two small groups of genealogies incor-

¹⁸⁶ Though note that *Amalech* is a biblical name: it is the Latin Vulgate spelling of Amalek, grandson of Esau and progenitor of the Amalekites (Genesis 36.12).

¹⁸⁷ The same is true of Irish genealogical texts composed as early as the seventh century: Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', p. 196.

¹⁸⁸ Ó Corráin would date the Leinster poems to the early seventh century, whereas Carney favoured the mid-fifth century: Ó Corráin, 'Irish Origin Legends', pp. 56–63; Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', pp. 65–73; Carney, 'Dating', pp. 48–50. For criticism of Carney's argument, see Breatnach, 'Poets', pp. 75–6. For some translations, see Koch, with Carey, *Celtic Heroic Age*, pp. 53–7 (§67 'Nídu díer dermait' and §68 'Núadu Necht').

¹⁸⁹ See above, p. 19, n. 97.

¹⁹⁰ *Corpus* III, 322–6; Edwards, 'Rethinking'; Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 414–19.

¹⁹¹ *HB* (Harl. 3859), §49. See below, p. 154.

porated into the Harleian genealogies probably originated as discrete genealogical tracts concerning the royal dynasties of Dyfed (HG 13–15) and Powys (HG 30–31) in the early ninth century.¹⁹² Neither tract extends over more than five generations. This is exactly what one would expect from the earliest stages of a written genealogical tradition. Comparative evidence suggests that early medieval knowledge of ancestry unsupported by writing rarely extended over about four generations.¹⁹³ As seen above, Gerald of Wales found it remarkable that many Welshmen in the twelfth century knew their pedigrees as far back as the seventh generation. The much longer pedigrees found in texts from medieval Wales, just like those in texts written elsewhere, are the result of multiple stages of augmentation in writing.¹⁹⁴ I have termed this process ‘pedigree growth’.¹⁹⁵ Pedigrees grew in length for two reasons. Firstly, it was desirable to base a new ruler’s written pedigree on an earlier ruler’s written pedigree, thereby causing the old pedigree to be ‘updated’.¹⁹⁶ Secondly, the chronologically remoter sections of pedigrees were extended backwards in time to accommodate developing pseudo-historical fictions, which could be used to connect the pedigrees’ subjects to broader cultural discourses of kingship and ethnicity. The detailed and lengthy pedigrees that resulted from this dual process were highly prestigious, just as they were in other cultural contexts.¹⁹⁷

Between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, there were three chief phases for the writing of extant secular literary genealogy in medieval Wales. Each phase was stimulated by a major change in the political landscape. The first change was the rise of the Merfynion between the early ninth and mid-tenth centuries.¹⁹⁸ This process was marked especially by Merfyn’s succession to the kingship of Gwynedd in or shortly after 825 and by the final conquest of Dyfed by the sons of Rhodri Mawr in or shortly after 904. The common source of the Harleian and Jesus 20 genealogies, which I call the ‘Gwynedd collection of genealogies’, was probably created in the context of claims by Rhodri Mawr to be overlord of various smaller kingdoms in northern and western Wales, while the Harleian genealogies themselves reflect the hegemonic assumptions that Owain, Rhodri’s great-grandson, had inherited upon the death of his father, Hywel Dda, in 950.¹⁹⁹

The second major change was the consolidation of power by the sons of Gruffudd ap Cynan in Gwynedd and the sons of Gruffudd ap Rhys in Deheubarth in the decades following the death of Henry I in 1135.²⁰⁰ For the remaining period of Welsh political independence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, their dynasties were two of the three most powerful Welsh dynasties in Wales, the other being the dynasty of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn in Powys.²⁰¹ However, unlike the dynasty of Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, the dynasties of Gruffudd ap Cynan and Gruffudd ap Rhys shared a common ancestor in the agnatic line: Rhodri Mawr. This circumstance stimulated a reorganisation of written genealogical records so as to channel several sources of legitimacy through the figure of Rhodri Mawr. In addition, an agnatic pedigree was created for Rhodri, tracing his lineage in the male line back through Coel Hen to Beli Mawr.²⁰² The earlier ninth- and tenth-century genealogical

¹⁹² Guy, ‘Earliest Welsh Genealogies’.

¹⁹³ Sisam, ‘Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies’, pp. 322–3; Thornton, ‘Orality’, p. 89; Pohl, ‘Genealogy’, p. 232.

¹⁹⁴ Sisam, ‘Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies’, p. 321; Meaney, ‘Scyld Scefing’, p. 13; Thornton, ‘Orality’, pp. 87 and 89–90; Ó Murchadha, ‘Rawlinson B. 502’, p. 325.

¹⁹⁵ Guy, ‘Earliest Welsh Genealogies’, p. 463.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Ó Corráin, ‘Historical Need’, p. 143: ‘Originality is, after all, a scarce commodity and it is easier to recycle old material, put it to new uses and new purposes, than to invent afresh’.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Henige, *Oral Historiography*, p. 99.

¹⁹⁸ See, most importantly, Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, chs 15–16.

¹⁹⁹ See Chapter 2.

²⁰⁰ *HW* II, chs 13–15; R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 45–55.

²⁰¹ On the latter, see now Stephenson, *Medieval Powys*; cf. my review in *Speculum* 93 (2018), 915–17.

²⁰² Guy, ‘Gerald’, pp. 53–4; see Chapter 3, pp. 116–18, and Chapter 5, pp. 234–5.

records of the Merfynion formed the natural starting point for such rewriting. The results of this process can be observed most clearly in the genealogical exposition at the beginning of the twelfth-century Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan and in the sections of the Jesus 20 genealogies focussed on Rhodri Mawr.²⁰³

The third major change was the rise of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth to a position of hegemony over other native Welsh princes in the early decades of the thirteenth century.²⁰⁴ An unprecedented outcome of Llywelyn's newly won position was his ability to redistribute the lands of Deheubarth among the descendants of the Lord Rhys at a meeting at Aberdyfi in 1216, where the true extent of Llywelyn's superiority over representatives of another major princely dynasty was made plain.²⁰⁵ Llywelyn did not go so far as to deny the royal status of other Welsh princes completely, but he had clearly established himself at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of Welsh royalty.²⁰⁶ Such a scenario demanded genealogical rationalisation, and indeed, from Llywelyn's point of view, legitimisation. In the Jesus 20 genealogies (JC 24–29), one can see a genealogist rationalising the relationship between Llywelyn and Rhys Gryg from the latter's point of view, emphasising that, despite Rhys's subjection to Llywelyn, Rhys remained royal in status and was, like Llywelyn, descended from the royal progenitor Rhodri Mawr. By contrast, in the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies one finds a thorough-going attempt to justify Llywelyn's hegemony in genealogical terms following the events of 1216.²⁰⁷

There was a fourth major change in the political landscape of medieval Wales that is not amply evidenced in surviving literary genealogy. This was the acquisition of hegemony across most of Wales during the eleventh century by a series of related rulers whose dynasties do not seem to have exercised royal authority beforehand. All of them were rulers of Gwynedd in the broader eleventh-century sense, wielding power across much of eastern and central Wales in addition to the heartland of Gwynedd in the north-west.²⁰⁸ These were Llywelyn ap Seisyll (r. 1018–23), Llywelyn's famous son Gruffudd (r. 1039–64), Gruffudd's half-brothers Rhiwallon (r. 1064–9) and Bleddyn (r. 1064–75), sons of Cynfyn, and lastly Bleddyn and Rhiwallon's cousin Trahaearn ap Caradog (r. 1075–81). It is likely that the political power of these rulers was rationalised in genealogical terms, but no such written genealogy survives from the period. This is probably because it would not have been deemed worthy of preservation under the Merfynion rulers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who preferred to hearken back to the genealogical precepts of the ninth and tenth centuries, which better suited their claims to legitimacy.²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, some aspects of the genealogical perspective of the eleventh century may survive in later texts. Characteristic of this perspective seems to have been the portrayal of Angharad, daughter of Maredudd ab Owain (d. 998/9) and mother, by different fathers, of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn and Rhiwallon and Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, as a conduit of genealogical legitimacy in Gwynedd and Deheubarth.²¹⁰ With such an emphasis, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn could have cast his hegemony over both Gwynedd and Deheubarth as a continuation of the power exercised by his maternal grandfather Maredudd ab Owain and the latter's paternal grandfather Hywel Dda. This emphasis on Angharad as a conduit of genealogical legitimacy is noticeable in the early twelfth-century portion of *Brut y Tywysogyon* and is reflected in the thirteenth-century genealogies of

²⁰³ VGC §3; JC 17–23.

²⁰⁴ HW II, chs 17–18; R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, ch. 8; Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 14–20.

²⁰⁵ HW II, 649; R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 227–8 and 243; Smith, *Llywelyn*, pp. 18–19.

²⁰⁶ See especially R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 245–7.

²⁰⁷ Compare Gough-Cooper's findings about the restructuring of the Cottonian chronicle in 1216 in order to draw attention to Llywelyn's importance: 'Decennovenal Reason'.

²⁰⁸ W. Davies, *Patterns*, pp. 41–2.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, p. 332.

²¹⁰ For some thoughtful consideration of Angharad, see Sean Davies, *First Prince*, pp. 10–12 and 20–1.

Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and Rhys Gryg.²¹¹ In a confused but no less indicative passage, the genealogies on the front flyleaf of the Red Book of Talgarth (Llanstephan 27, c. 1400), written by a hand roughly contemporary with the main hands of the manuscript, seem to refer to Angharad as *Angharat Benng[w]raic*, ‘Angharad Chief-Wife’, reflecting the same notion at an even later stage.²¹² The notion may have once formed the basis of a now-lost literary genealogy composed during the reign of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn.

In the ecclesiastical sphere, major changes in the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries stimulated the production of Welsh saints’ genealogies. This period saw the regularisation of the Welsh dioceses, the establishment and endowment of the new monastic orders, often at the expense of earlier ecclesiastical institutions, and attempts by Anglo-Norman kings, lords and clerics to impose their authority over Welsh churches.²¹³ One literary response to these pressures was Latin hagiography, which flourished in this period.²¹⁴ Another was literary genealogy about saints. It is probable that, in some instances, details about the immediate familial relations of a church’s patron saint were successfully transmitted over time because they were embedded in the liturgy used to commemorate the saint. It was through precisely such means that names of the immediate family members of the sixth-century St Samson were transmitted to the author of the First Life of St Samson, working some century or more later.²¹⁵ On the other hand, accurate details about a saint’s extended family were much less likely to be preserved. For those interested in promoting an ecclesiastical centre associated with a saint, the accurate transmission of such details may not have been an overriding concern, since it was often more useful to claim, rightly or wrongly, that a saint had been a member of a local royal dynasty. That dynasty’s own secular genealogy could then form the basis for a lengthier saint’s genealogy. Sometimes these saints’ genealogies were associated with hagiography, as witnessed by the pedigree of St David appended to Rhygyfarch’s Life of St David, and by the collection of genealogies concerning St Cadog appended to Llifris’s Life of St Cadog in Cotton Vespasian A. xiv, part i.²¹⁶ Sometimes saints’ genealogies could be grouped together in distinct genealogical tracts, as seen in the Ceredig and Brychan Tracts.²¹⁷ This process culminated in the production of *Bonedd y Saint*, a large and diverse collection of saints’ genealogies probably assembled in the old *clas* church of Clynnog Fawr sometime between the mid-twelfth and late-thirteenth century.²¹⁸

Who was responsible for writing literary genealogy in medieval Wales? Between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, Welsh literary genealogy did not break its contact with literate, and usually Latinate, textual culture, suggesting that the writing of literary genealogy should

²¹¹ *BT* (P) 1106 [1109] and (twice) 1113 [1116]; *BT* (R) 1105 [1109] and (twice) 1113 [1116]; *BT* (S) 1113 [1116]; *JC* 27; *LIIG* 11.1.4, 12.2.4 and 28.2.3. For the early twelfth-century portion of *Brut y Tywysogion*, see the essential work of O. W. Jones, ‘*Brut y Tywysogion*’. For Angharad in later genealogical writing, see Chapter 4 below, p. 202.

²¹² My thanks to Myriah Williams for bringing these genealogies to my attention.

²¹³ For an overview, see J. R. Davies, ‘Aspects’. Recently, scholars have cautioned against over-emphasising the responsibility of Anglo-Norman aggressors for ecclesiastical change: Golding, ‘Trans-Border Transactions’; J. R. Davies, ‘Cult’.

²¹⁴ For the role of hagiography in the promotion of the bishopric of Llandaf in the twelfth century, see J. R. Davies, *Book of Llandaf*, ch. 7. Many eleventh- and twelfth-century Welsh saints’ Lives are concerned to defend the rights (especially property rights) and privileges of ecclesiastical institutions against secular encroachment, both native and foreign: W. Davies, ‘Property Rights’, pp. 527–8; J. R. Davies, ‘Cult’, pp. 47–51. For signs of hagiography in Wales before the eleventh century, see Guy, ‘*Life*’, pp. 2–4.

²¹⁵ *VS Samsonis I*, I.1 (ed. and transl. Flobert, pp. 146–9); Poulin, ‘La circulation’, p. 49. For the portrayal of Samson’s family in the First Life, see Sowerby, ‘Family’.

²¹⁶ *VS David*, §68; *VS Cadoci*, §§45–7.

²¹⁷ These are discussed in Chapter 3 below, pp. 130–42.

²¹⁸ See Barry Lewis’s forthcoming edition of *Bonedd y Saint*.

be associated in the first instance with clerical personnel.²¹⁹ Literary genealogy often accompanied Latin works about the past, such as *Historia Brittonum*, the Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Life of St Cadog. Major Latin texts can also be seen to influence literary genealogy directly, as shown by the twelfth-century pedigree tracing Rhodri Mawr's line back to Adam, which drew on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *De gestis Britonum*.

In the earlier period, it was the members of major *clas* churches who wrote down literary genealogy.²²⁰ These *clas* churches included St Davids, where the St Davids recension was redacted in the tenth century; Llancarfan, where a tenth-century genealogical tract concerning Morgan ap Owain, king of Morgannwg, seems to have been preserved; and Abergele, where the ninth-century Gwynedd collection of genealogies may have been composed.²²¹ Some of these communities maintained close relationships with local rulers, as shown by the commemoration of eighth- and ninth-century kings of Glywysing on stone monuments erected at the important church of Llanilltud Fawr (Llantwit Major).²²² Individual pedigrees would have been communicated orally to churchmen via rulers' trusted representatives, such as poets, or indeed by members of the relevant dynasties. In some cases, the churchmen themselves would have belonged to the ruling dynasty, like Gruffudd ap Cynan's son Idwal (abbot of Penmon) and Owain Gwynedd's son Cadwallon (abbot of Bardsey), and would accordingly have already known the dynasty's pedigree.²²³ Such pedigrees would then have been recorded according to the forms and conventions learned from the wider tradition of Insular literary genealogy.

As is evident from other types of writing, the circumstances pertaining to the writing of literary genealogy underwent major changes during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During this period, in many (though not all) localities in Wales, the earlier *clas* churches gradually ceased to be the primary centres of written literary activity. In their stead, newly founded Cistercian monasteries emerged as important new centres of native learning.²²⁴ Just as early centres of Welsh chronicling like St Davids and Llanbadarn Fawr were replaced by Cistercian monasteries like Strata Florida and Valle Crucis, so the recording of genealogy was increasingly undertaken in the new Cistercian foundations too.²²⁵ When Gutun Owain rediscovered the riches of medieval Welsh literary genealogy in the fifteenth century, he did so in the vernacular manuscripts of Valle Crucis Abbey.²²⁶ By the late thirteenth century, and probably from as early as the reign of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (c. 1200–40), Cistercian monasteries had become the foremost centres for the production of Welsh vernacular manuscripts.²²⁷ In some cases, these manuscripts included literary genealogy, as in the lost manuscript Hengwrt 33, probably written in Valle Crucis.²²⁸

Perhaps from no earlier than the latter half of the twelfth century, it seems to have become gradually more common for Welsh secular professionals, such as lawyers, to own and even create their own books.²²⁹ The testimony of Gerald of Wales shows that poets should be counted among such book-owning professionals. However, in native Wales, the literary activity of secular professionals did not necessarily take place primarily in secular environments. In the

²¹⁹ Just as in early medieval Ireland: Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past', pp. 188–9.

²²⁰ For *clas* churches, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 602–14; Evans, 'Survival'.

²²¹ For a map of major *clas* churches, see Rees, *Historical Atlas*, pl. 27. For St Davids and Llancarfan, see below, pp. 59 and 85; for Abergele, see Guy, 'Origins'.

²²² *Corpus* I, 369–73 (G63) and 377–82 (G65).

²²³ LIIG 15.3 and 12.2.

²²⁴ R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, pp. 194–201.

²²⁵ For this transition in chronicling, see Pryce, 'Chronicling'.

²²⁶ Guy, 'Writing Genealogy'; see too Chapter 4 below, p. 217.

²²⁷ *MWM* 14–15 and 52–3.

²²⁸ Guy, 'Lost Medieval Manuscript', pp. 84–91.

²²⁹ For the literacy of medieval Welsh lawyers, see Pryce, 'Lawbooks', esp. pp. 41–3; cf. Guy, 'Gerald', p. 55; *MWM* 15 and 52–4.

thirteenth century, the great lawyer family of Iorwerth ap Madog of Arfon Uwch Gwyrfa, which included at least two professional poets, seems to have been closely involved, not unnaturally, with the old but still flourishing *clas* church of Clynog Fawr on their doorstep.²³⁰ The Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies imply a similar relationship in a genealogical context. In one section of this text, special interest is shown in the family of Einion ap Gwalchmai (see Figure 1.1). Einion was a professional poet, and, between 1217 and 1223, he was one of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's leading officials.²³¹ He also seems to have been expert in the law, and may have functioned as Llywelyn's court judge.²³² He was well-placed to learn the genealogical doctrines of Llywelyn's dynasty. Einion, or a close member of his family, may have been responsible for the creation of the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies. Yet the manuscript transmission of the text indicates that it entered a Cistercian milieu at an early stage, and there are other indications that its composition might be associated with Aberconwy Abbey, a Cistercian foundation patronised by Llywelyn (and where Llywelyn was buried).²³³ These various indications are not mutually exclusive; Einion could have composed the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies using the literary resources of Aberconwy Abbey.

With the destruction of the native dynasty of Gwynedd in 1282–3 and the consequent annexation of native Wales by the English king Edward I, the medieval Welsh tradition of literary genealogy effectively ceased. The natural royal subjects of literary genealogy had either been destroyed or reduced to baronial status.²³⁴ Genealogical texts concerning earlier rulers continued to be reproduced, as shown by the Mostyn genealogies, copied into NLW 3036B (Mostyn 117) by the same scribe who wrote the Book of Taliesin (Peniarth 2) in the first half of the fourteenth century, and by the Jesus 20 genealogies, probably copied in Glamorgan or Gower around 1400.²³⁵ But very few new secular literary genealogies entered writing. In order to continue, literary genealogy needed to undergo the same transition as formal praise poetry. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the chief patrons of professional poets were the native princes, but after 1282–3 it was necessary for professional poets to seek patronage from the emerging class of native Welsh gentry.²³⁶ Literary genealogy was slower to transition. There are only a few sporadic examples of genealogy being written about the Welsh gentry in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The lost Llanforda manuscript of Welsh law, written around 1325 for one Iorwerth ap Llywelyn ap Tudur, contained a pedigree of the manuscript's patron traced back as far as *Espwys vap Espwch*.²³⁷ Around 1400, a confused genealogical text concerning the ancestry of Dafydd ap Hopcyn, a local gentleman of Ynysdawy, was written onto the front flyleaf of the Red Book of Talgarth (Llanstephan 27).²³⁸ The inaccuracy and chaotic structuring of this short text suggest that it was a one-off production rather than a unique survival from a widespread tradition of contemporary genealogical writing. It is possible that a written genealogy about Owain Glyndŵr informed Iolo Goch's poem *Achau Owain Glyndŵr* (composed 1385 × c. 1397), which displays far more detailed genealogical knowledge than most poems composed in the

²³⁰ Sims-Williams, 'Clas Beuno', pp. 118–19 and 121–2. For the family, see Jenkins, 'Iorwerth'; Jenkins, 'Ynad Coch'; Jenkins, 'Family'. Their genealogy is described in LIIG 55 in a section entitled 'Gwyr Arfon'.

²³¹ Stephenson, *Political Power*, pp. 14, 98 and 210; *AWR* nos 239, 242 and 250. See Chapter 4 below, p. 215.

²³² Stephenson, *Political Power*, p. 14; Pryce, 'Lawbooks', pp. 44–5.

²³³ Cf. Stephenson, 'Rulers', p. 91. See Chapter 4 below, p. 223.

²³⁴ Carr, 'Aristocracy'.

²³⁵ For the Mostyn genealogies, see Chapter 5 below, pp. 243–5. For Jesus 20, see Chapter 3 below, pp. 102–6.

²³⁶ Guy, 'Literature'; Carr, *Gentry*, pp. 204–7; Lewis, 'Content', pp. 88–9.

²³⁷ Bartrum, 'Maelda Hynaf'. For the lost Llanforda manuscript, see Jenkins, 'Llawysgrif'.

²³⁸ For Dafydd ap Hopcyn's family, see Morgan, 'Glamorgan', p. 46; *WG I* III, s. 'Gruffudd Gethin 1' and 'Gruffudd Gethin 2'.

period.²³⁹ However, Owain Glyndŵr is unrepresentative of contemporary *uchelwyr*, since he had the status of a Welsh baron and was a direct male-line descendant of the princes of northern Powys.²⁴⁰ Overall, it may be indicative that when Guto'r Glyn, in the 1430s, speaks of reading genealogy with his patron Rhys ap Siancyn, it is *Bonedd Owain Gwynedd* that is read, rather than *achau yr uchelwyr*.²⁴¹

Literary genealogy in medieval Wales had to wait until the second half of the fifteenth century for a full revival. This was the period when the pedigrees of the Welsh gentry were first recorded systematically. To a far greater extent than earlier in the medieval period, it was now that the bards assumed the pivotal role in the collection and recording of pedigrees. Some early examples may be seen in Peniarth 51, written by the Glamorgan poet Gwilym Tew (fl. c. 1460–80).²⁴² But it was Gwilym Tew's northern contemporary, the poet and scholar Gutun Owain (fl. c. 1451–c. 1500), who refashioned the literary genre of Welsh genealogy in the form in which it would become so popular in sixteenth-century Wales.²⁴³ Gutun Owain's contribution to literary genealogy was twofold. Firstly, he sought out and copied as many versions of the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies as he could find, especially in the Cistercian libraries at Valle Crucis and perhaps Strata Marcella.²⁴⁴ He developed a deep familiarity with the medieval material, leading to his redaction of a new recension of the corpus.²⁴⁵ Secondly, he set about recording the pedigrees of the contemporary Welsh gentry (especially those of north-eastern Wales) on a large scale.²⁴⁶ He did so partly out of deep antiquarian interest, and partly out of a practical need to access genealogical information about his patrons, which he could incorporate into his poetry.²⁴⁷ Much of his information derived from contemporary oral sources, yet the resulting written pedigrees are generally reliable for the preceding two centuries or so.²⁴⁸ Some of this accuracy was the product of Gutun Owain's deep personal acquaintance with the material, which he had accumulated

²³⁹ Iolo Goch, *Achau Owain Glyndŵr* (ed. Johnston, pp. 36–42); Johnston, 'Iolo Goch', pp. 90–3. It would be profitable to examine the genealogies of Owain Glyndŵr found in sixteenth-century manuscripts to determine whether they could have been composed during his lifetime. Versions of a text designed to show that Owain Glyndŵr was, through his mother, descended from Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and King John are found in Llanstephan 12, pp. 18–19 and 65–6 (s. xvi^{med}) and Brogyntyn I. 15, pp. 382 and 391 (1593–6); these must derive from the common exemplar of those manuscripts, probably written by Ieuan Brechfa (cf. Table A.4.1.1). The constituent components of the same text are also, interestingly, found among the few genealogical fragments in Peniarth 51, on pp. 186 and 209 (written by Gwilym Tew in the 1460s and 1470s). Immediately following the text in Llanstephan 12, p. 19 and Brogyntyn I. 15, p. 382 is a pedigree of Phylip ap Madog ab Ieuan, whose pedigree also occurs in Peniarth 51, p. 143. Phylip ap Madog was an early patron of Gutun Owain, and his pedigree is recorded in two of Gutun Owain's own genealogical manuscripts: see Guy, 'Writing Genealogy', pp. 109–11. Perhaps Ieuan Brechfa and Gwilym Tew both used a manuscript by Gutun Owain that included this genealogy of Owain Glyndŵr (cf. LIIG (GO) G40.2.1–2). Might Iolo Goch be alluding to this same written genealogy when he claims that Owain was 'Aur burffrwyth iôr Aberffraw' ('fine pure fruit of the lord of Aberffraw', l. 96)?

²⁴⁰ Carr, 'Aristocracy', pp. 121, 124 and 127.

²⁴¹ Guto'r Glyn, *Moliant i Rys ap Siancyn o Lyn-nedd*, l. 44 (ed. and transl. Barry Lewis, <<http://gutorglyn.net>> [accessed 12 April 2019]). This may be a reference to the *Plant Owain Gwynedd* section of the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies (see Table 4.1).

²⁴² E.g. Peniarth 51, pp. 114–19, 143 and 209. See above, n. 239. For Gwilym Tew, see G. J. Williams, *Traddodiad*, pp. 43–8.

²⁴³ I have explored Gutun Owain's contribution to literary genealogy in more detail elsewhere: see Guy, 'Writing Genealogy', pp. 105–12. See too the discussion in Chapter 4 below, pp. 170–80. For previous examinations of Gutun Owain's genealogical work, see Bartrum, 'Notes', pt 1, 71–2; pt 2, 104–6; F. Jones, 'Approach', pp. 352–6.

²⁴⁴ See below, pp. 217–20.

²⁴⁵ Gutun Owain's recension is edited in Appendix B.5.

²⁴⁶ See especially Peniarth 131iii, pp. 92–107 and 125–38, and Rylands Welsh 1, f. 10v onwards.

²⁴⁷ Guy, 'Writing Genealogy', pp. 108–11.

²⁴⁸ For the reliability of the pedigrees, see Bartrum, 'Notes', pt 1, 68–71; pt 2, 102–4.

from many separate oral sources. The genealogical information acquired from these sources was recorded using literary genealogical forms like *achau'r mamau* that Gutun Owain had inherited from the medieval collections, even though Gutun Owain himself tended to implement a more systematic approach than is found in the earlier material.

In south-western Wales, Gutun Owain's younger contemporary, Ieuan Brechfa (fl. c. 1490–c. 1520), another professional poet, was probably the first to record the pedigrees of the gentry systematically.²⁴⁹ He made several copies of the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies, which seem to have been the original exemplars for the southern branch of the textual tradition. Ieuan Brechfa also created new genealogical texts focussed on historical subjects. The texts edited by Bartrum as 'Plant yr Arglwydd Rhys' and 'Bonedd Henrri Saithved' are both first found in Ieuan Brechfa's manuscripts, and were probably his work.²⁵⁰ In this respect, Ieuan Brechfa was again following Gutun Owain, since the latter was almost certainly responsible for composing the text edited by Bartrum as 'Rhandiroedd Powys', two different drafts of which are found in manuscripts in Gutun Owain's hand.²⁵¹

Following the pioneering work of Gutun Owain and Ieuan Brechfa, literary genealogy became something of a cottage industry in sixteenth-century Wales. By the second half of the sixteenth century, most gentlemen and professional poets probably owned genealogical manuscripts, very many of which survive. This is the period to which the various versions of the triad of *Y Tri Chof* pertain, which list genealogy as one of the three subjects that bards ought to keep in memory.²⁵² The genealogical collections compiled by Gutun Owain and Ieuan Brechfa were recopied and augmented, and over time came to include a higher proportion of the contemporary gentry from across Wales. As the genealogical collections became more comprehensive, they assumed a cultural importance greater than the sum of their individual pedigrees. Just as the original purpose of early medieval literary genealogical collections had been to represent the ethnic group through the lineages forming its body politic, so too did sixteenth-century Welsh genealogical collections come to embody and define the Welsh nation through the lineages of the native Welsh political class of that time.

Modern Approaches to Medieval Welsh Genealogy

Serious scholarly engagement with medieval Welsh genealogy began with Egerton Phillimore's editions of the Jesus 20 genealogies and Harleian genealogies, published in 1887 and 1888 respectively.²⁵³ Phillimore's observations about the genealogies were usually

²⁴⁹ As found in Peniarth 131viii. For Ieuan Brechfa, see Guy, 'Brut Ieuan Brechfa'; Bartrum, 'Notes', pt 1, 72–3; pt 2, 103; F. Jones, 'Approach', p. 356.

²⁵⁰ Bartrum, 'Plant'; Bartrum, 'Bonedd Henrri'. For the former, see below, p. 181, n. 121.

²⁵¹ The earlier draft is in BL Add. 14919iii, frag. 2, ff. 129r–131v, and the later draft is in BL Add. 14919iii, frag. 1, ff. 118r–121v. For an edition of the text, see Bartrum, 'Rhandiroedd Powys'. Note too that a different version of 'Plant yr Arglwydd Rhys' appears in Gutun Owain's hand in Rylands Welsh 1, ff. 62–63 (cf. Daniel Huws *apud* *MMBL* III, 469), but the relationship between this text and Ieuan Brechfa's text has yet to be worked out.

²⁵² One version is recorded by the poet Simwnt Fychan in the *Pum Llyfr Cerddwriaeth*: 'Tri chof yssydd: iachav, arvav, a ranndiroedd' ('three things to remember: genealogies, arms, and divisions of land'): *GP* 134, l. 27. Another, lengthier version was recorded in English by the copyist John Jones of Gellilyfdy: G. J. Williams, 'Tri Chof', pp. 234–5; cf. Bromwich, 'Traddodiad', pp. 51–2. Note the absence of genealogy from the similar listing of three things that poets should know in the Red Book of Hergest version of the Welsh bardic grammar: 'Tri pheth a beir y gerdawr uot yn amyl: kyfarwydyt ystoriaeu, a bardoniaeth, a hengerd' ('Three things that give amplitude to a poet: knowledge of histories, the poetic art, and old verse'): *GP* 18, ll. 13–14; cf. *GP* 37, ll. 20–1 (Llanstephan 3); translation from *TYP* lix–lx.

²⁵³ Phillimore, 'Pedigrees'; Phillimore, 'Annales Cambriae'. For Phillimore's approach to medieval Welsh genealogy, see Guy, 'Egerton Phillimore', pp. 44–5.

perspicacious but he unfortunately distributed them among a variety of publications.²⁵⁴ Other still useful editions of genealogical texts were published by Phillimore's friend and younger contemporary Arthur Wade-Evans.²⁵⁵ Wade-Evans published most early versions of *Bonedd y Saint*, in addition to *Bonedd Gwŷr y Gogledd*, the St Cadog genealogies, *Progenies Keredic*, and several versions of the Brychan Tract and *Achau'r Saint*.²⁵⁶ However, the most significant and enduring editions of medieval Welsh genealogical texts were published by Peter Bartrum in 1966 in his *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts (EWGT)*, which includes detailed commentary on the texts in the form of endnotes.²⁵⁷ In addition to revising texts that had already been edited by others, Bartrum published a new series of genealogical texts preserved in late medieval and early modern manuscripts that had previously been little known to scholarship. He labelled these texts 'Plant Brychan', 'Bonedd yr Arwyr', 'Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru' and 'Hen Lwythau Gwynedd a'r Mars', though only the first of these titles is attested in the manuscripts. Bartrum had initially published editions of the latter three texts in individual articles; by comparison with *EWGT*, these articles contain more detailed annotation, but their texts have undergone less revision.²⁵⁸ In the present volume, Bartrum's four texts are treated together as a single composition, which I call the 'Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies'.

Several surveys of medieval Welsh genealogy have been attempted, beginning with Phillimore's 1887 list of medieval Welsh genealogical manuscripts.²⁵⁹ Most important of these is Francis Jones's monograph-length article of 1948, which, while certainly dated, maintains great value, especially for the late medieval and early modern periods.²⁶⁰ In the 1970s, Welsh genealogy assumed a significant place within broader surveys of medieval genealogy by Léopold Genicot and David Dumville.²⁶¹ More specific accounts of medieval Welsh genealogy were written by Molly Miller in 1977 and 1980 and, later, by David Thornton in 1998; these, like Dumville's account, were informed to a significant extent by modern anthropological literature on oral genealogy in non-literate societies.²⁶² David Thornton has also discussed the practical use of medieval Welsh and Irish genealogies as a

²⁵⁴ See especially his notes to Owen, *Description*. Phillimore's most substantial contributions to the latter are listed in Guy, 'Egerton Phillimore', pp. 47–50.

²⁵⁵ For the relationship between Phillimore and Wade-Evans, see Guy, 'Egerton Phillimore', pp. 41–2 and 46.

²⁵⁶ The individual versions of *Bonedd y Saint* are published in the following locations. A: *LBS* IV, 369–81; B: *LBS* IV, 371–3; C: Phillimore, 'Fragment', pp. 133–4; D: Wade-Evans, 'Bonedd y Saint, D'; Dd: Wade-Evans, *VSBG*, 320–3; E: Wade-Evans, 'Bonedd y Saint, E'; F, G, H: Wade-Evans, 'Bonedd y Saint, F'; cf. Bartrum, 'Late Additions'; *EWGT* 51–67. A new edition of *Bonedd y Saint* is being prepared by Barry Lewis. Wade-Evans's editions of the other genealogical texts may be found in the following locations. *Bonedd Gwŷr y Gogledd*: Wade-Evans, 'Beuno Sant', pp. 339–40; cf. *EWGT* 72–4. The St Cadog genealogies: *VSBG* 116–19; cf. *EWGT* 24–5. *Progenies Keredic*: Wade-Evans, 'Brychan Documents', pp. 27 and 34; Wade-Evans, 'Essay', pp. 131–2; *VSBG*, 319–20; cf. *EWGT* 20. Versions of the Brychan Tract: Wade-Evans, 'Brychan Documents', pp. 24–37; Wade-Evans, 'Brychan Brycheiniog', pp. 13–23; Wade-Evans, 'Bonedd y Saint, E', p. 174; Wade-Evans, 'Bonedd y Saint, F', pp. 374–8; *VSBG* 313–19; cf. *EWGT* 14–19, 42–4 and 81–4. *Achau'r Saint*: Wade-Evans, 'Achau'r Saint'; cf. *EWGT* 68–71.

²⁵⁷ Bartrum produced a list of corrections to *EWGT* in 'Corrections'. *EWGT* was reviewed by Melville Richards in *EHR* 83 (1968), 592–3, Patrick Ford in *Speculum* 44 (1969), 440–2, and Rachel Bromwich in 'Early Welsh Genealogies'. Much knowledgeable commentary on the genealogies is found in another major book by Bartrum: *WCD*. For an overview of Bartrum's work, see Siddons, 'Peter Bartrum'.

²⁵⁸ Bartrum, 'Bonedd yr Arwyr'; Bartrum, 'Achau'; Bartrum, 'Hen Lwythau'.

²⁵⁹ Phillimore, 'Welsh Pedigrees'.

²⁶⁰ F. Jones, 'Approach'; see too his shorter 'Welsh Pedigrees'.

²⁶¹ Genicot, *Les généalogies*, with an important 1985 supplement; Dumville, 'Kingship'.

²⁶² Miller, 'Forms'; Miller, 'Royal Pedigrees'; Thornton, 'Orality'; cf. Ó Corráin, 'Irish Origin Legends', p. 83.

source for prosopography.²⁶³ In 2008, Nia Powell summarised some of the major features of medieval Welsh genealogy.²⁶⁴

Outside of the editorial process, most work on medieval Welsh genealogy has taken one of two forms. Firstly, and not unreasonably, there have been attempts to extract from medieval Welsh genealogies information about inter-personal relationships. This approach is epitomised by Peter Bartrum's magnificent synthesis of all Welsh genealogical records written prior to c. 1580, which resulted in twenty-six volumes of indexed diagrammatic family trees depicting every person mentioned in the texts born before c. 1500: eight volumes for the period 300–1400 and a further eighteen volumes for the period 1400–1500.²⁶⁵ Following the original publications, Bartrum produced a further eight lists of additions and corrections for the first series and four for the second series. Altogether, Bartrum's *Welsh Genealogies* is an invaluable and unparalleled prosopographical resource for historians of medieval Wales, despite its comparative lack of explicit engagement with the medieval material on its own terms. Bartrum's researches enabled him to become the foremost authority on late medieval and early modern Welsh genealogical manuscripts, which he discussed with admirable precision and detail in three successive articles; these articles were an essential starting point for Chapter 4 of the present volume.²⁶⁶ More recently, Bartrum's synthesising approach has been continued by Michael Siddons, who has created an additional corpus of indexed diagrammatic family trees for every person mentioned in Welsh genealogical records who was born in the sixteenth century.²⁶⁷ Siddons's work is deliberately designed as a sequel to Bartrum's, with the added distinction that it compares the genealogical material more systematically with contemporary record evidence. Siddons is also the only scholar to date who has attempted to survey the late medieval and early modern Welsh pedigree rolls, which can throw valuable light on the literary genealogies surviving in codices.²⁶⁸

The second major approach to medieval Welsh genealogy has involved historians of the earlier Middle Ages attempting to use genealogies to write the dynastic histories of particular kingdoms, owing to the lack of alternative source material. Such studies have tended to take the individual pedigree as the unit of analysis, paying less attention to the genealogical collections in which the pedigrees are often found.²⁶⁹ There is certainly merit to

²⁶³ Thornton, 'Kings'; Thornton, *Kings*, chs 1–2.

²⁶⁴ Powell, 'Genealogical Narratives'.

²⁶⁵ *WG 1*; *WG 2*; cf. Siddons, 'Using Peter Bartrum's *Welsh Genealogies*'.

²⁶⁶ Bartrum, 'Notes', pts 1–3.

²⁶⁷ *WG 3*; see my review in *WHR* 29 (2019), 480–2.

²⁶⁸ Siddons, *Welsh Pedigree Rolls*; Siddons, 'Welsh Pedigree Rolls — Additions'; Siddons, 'Welsh Pedigree Rolls: Further Additions'.

²⁶⁹ See especially Kirby, 'British Dynastic History'. For studies of the genealogical records of particular kingdoms, see the following. For Dyfed: Rhys, 'Irish Invasions' (1892); James, 'Harleian Ms. 3859 Genealogy II' (1969); Pringle, 'Kings' (1970–1); Miller, 'Date-Guessing and Dyfed' (1977/8); Thornton, *Kings*, pp. 142–55 (2003); Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence*, pp. 180–2 (2011); Guy, 'Earliest Welsh Genealogies' (2018). For Glywysing/Morgannwg: Anscombe, 'Some Old Welsh Pedigrees' (1913); Bartrum, 'Some Studies' (1948); Guy, 'Did the Harleian Genealogies Draw on Archival Sources?' (2012); Sims-Williams, 'Kings' (2017); Sims-Williams, *Book of Llandaf*, ch. 13 (2019; my thanks to Patrick Sims-Williams for allowing me to view this prior to publication). For Gwynedd: Miller, 'Date-Guessing and Pedigrees' (1975/6); Thornton, 'Neglected Genealogy' (1992); Sims-Williams, 'Historical Need' (1994); Thornton, *Kings*, pp. 75–120 (2003); Guy, 'Gerald' (2018). For Powys: G. P. Jones, 'Notes' (1930); Dumville, 'Sub-Roman Britain' (1977); Sims-Williams, 'Historical Need' (1994); O. W. Jones, 'Hereditas Pouoisi' (2009); Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, pp. 449–51 (2013); Guy, 'Earliest Welsh Genealogies' (2018). For the Isle of Man: G. E. Jones, 'Idic uab Anarawt' (1972–4); B. L. Jones, 'Gwriad's Heritage' (1990); Sims-Williams, 'Historical Need' (1994); Thornton, *Kings*, pp. 88–96 (2003); Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, 467–79 (2013). For the Men of the North: G. P. Jones, 'Scandinavian Settlement' (1925); Loth, 'Une généalogie' (1930); Miller, 'Historicity' (1974–6); Chadwick, *British Heroic Age*, Part II, Chapter III (1976). For Cornwall: Pearce, 'Traditions' (1971–2).

this approach, because on one level the pedigrees surviving in early medieval genealogical collections have indeed been shaped by the political circumstances and preoccupations of the dynasties that they concern. Modern understanding of the pedigrees in these terms was revolutionised in the 1970s and 1980s, with the realisation that early medieval pedigrees were not simply records of biological claims that could be proved either true or false; rather, as Donnchadh Ó Corráin has put it, “descent” and “kinship” can be metaphors for other processes: subjugation of one dynasty by another, dynastic replacement, contiguity, establishment of hierarchy or an order of precedence.²⁷⁰ In other words, early medieval genealogy could bear an ‘aetiological’ function by representing past relationships in such a way as to deliberately foreshadow present political and social circumstances.²⁷¹ Such a practice could easily be turned to propagandistic purposes if the foreshadowing was designed to alter the audience’s perception of present reality rather than merely represent it. Interpretations of early medieval genealogies undertaken from this point of view have enriched our understanding of early medieval political and intellectual culture more generally.²⁷²

Relatively few studies of medieval Welsh genealogy have taken the genealogical collection as the basic unit of analysis, despite such collections being the primary textual context in which the majority of pedigrees survive. Notable exceptions include detailed studies of the Harleian genealogies and the genealogies at the beginning of the *Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, though such studies are sometimes hindered by a lack of appreciation of the Welsh tradition of literary genealogy as a whole.²⁷³ Without an inclusive understanding of the genealogical collections and their relative positions within the wider textual tradition of medieval Welsh genealogy, one overlooks crucial contextual information that is essential for critical understanding of individual genealogies.

It is a central tenet of the present work that proper appreciation of surviving genealogies can only progress from a sound understanding of the circumstances surrounding the production and transmission of the genealogical *texts* in which the genealogies are found. This is the crucial step that must be taken between the edition of the texts and their use as historical sources, as was recognised by Molly Miller over forty years ago:²⁷⁴

The question brings us to tradition in the proper sense of that much-abused word: the *traditio* or transmission of a body of knowledge and method. With certain knowledge and certain methods only certain confusions are likely or even possible: so every confusion or error that we think we see has certain implications for the body of work from which it arose, and helps to define and characterize that body of work. The members of a kinship group will be careful about their own pedigree, careless about their neighbours’, and derogatory about their enemies’: only if we know which were which shall we avoid confusion. The carefulness of a kindred about its own pedigree does not exclude legal fictions or claims to heroic ancestry or collateral saints: we need to know also whether the *traditio* is of lawyers, poets, churchmen, or folklore. From the nature of our materials, we need detailed work to establish the character of our sources, the centres of *traditio*, the character, subject-matter, and intellectual quality of the *traditiones*. When these preliminaries are settled, then detailed criticism of a new kind can begin.

²⁷⁰ Ó Corráin, ‘Creating the Past’, p. 183 (1998); cf. Ó Corráin, ‘Irish Origin Legends’, p. 74 (1985); Ó Corráin, ‘Historical Need’, p. 144 (1986); Dumville, ‘Sub-Roman Britain’, p. 178 (1977); Dumville, ‘Kingship’, pp. 85–8 (1977); Miller, ‘Forms’, pp. 205–6 (1977); *EIWK* 112–16 (1993).

²⁷¹ For ‘aetiology’, see Ó Corráin, ‘Irish Origin Legends’, pp. 74–83.

²⁷² This approach to genealogy has been informed to a significant extent by anthropological research: see, for example, Bohanan, ‘Genealogical Charter’, and the summary in Wilson, *Genealogy*, pp. 27–36. Since the 1970s, the same understanding has been applied to biblical genealogies: Malamet, ‘Tribal Societies’; Wilson, *Genealogy*, ch. 3; Aufrecht, ‘Genealogy’, pp. 215–18.

²⁷³ For the Harleian genealogies: Nicholson, ‘Dynasty’ (1908); Thornton, ‘Power’, ch. 3 (1991); Guy, ‘Textual History’ (2016; this is superseded by Chapter 2 below). For the genealogies in the *Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*: A. Jones, *History*, pp. 30–50 (1910); *HGK* cci–ccxix (1977); Thornton, ‘Genealogy’ (1996).

²⁷⁴ Miller, ‘Forms’, p. 206.

The objective of the remainder of this book is to explore some of these preliminaries. An attempt has been made to analyse the textual histories of the three major collections of secular genealogy produced in Wales between the beginning of the extant written tradition around 800 and the destruction of native political power towards the end of the thirteenth century. In addition, it has been necessary to go much beyond 1300 in order to trace the transmission of the earlier texts in later manuscripts, as may be seen particularly in Chapters 4 and 5. Most other minor genealogical texts surviving from medieval Wales enter the discussion to illustrate and complicate the analysis of the major collections. Some of these minor genealogical texts, including the Mostyn genealogies and the genealogies in Exeter 3514, receive more sustained attention in Chapter 5. Overall, the studies in the remainder of this volume argue that most of the secular genealogical texts surviving from medieval Wales transmit manifestations of a single, overarching *traditio*, which grew out of the Insular tradition of literary genealogy of the early Middle Ages. Insofar as it is now visible, that *traditio* began in the second half of the ninth century with the production of what I term the ‘Gwynedd collection of genealogies’, even though that collection itself probably drew on earlier sources of diverse origin. Once established, this body of material continued to evolve into the thirteenth century and beyond. Two recensions of the Gwynedd collection arguably underlie almost all surviving medieval Welsh secular genealogies: the tenth-century ‘St Davids recension’ and the twelfth-century ‘pseudo-Rhodri Mawr recension’.

Each of the following three chapters takes a major Welsh genealogical collection as its subject: the Gwynedd collection, best represented by the Harleian genealogies, in Chapter 2; the Jesus 20 genealogies in Chapter 3; and the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies in Chapter 4. In each case, the manuscripts, structure and sources of the relevant text are analysed, and suggestions are made as to the dates, locations and circumstances of the text’s evolution. Drawing on the conclusions of these studies, Chapter 5 focusses on the diachronic development of the pedigrees of the kings of Gwynedd between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, and examines their influence outside of Wales.